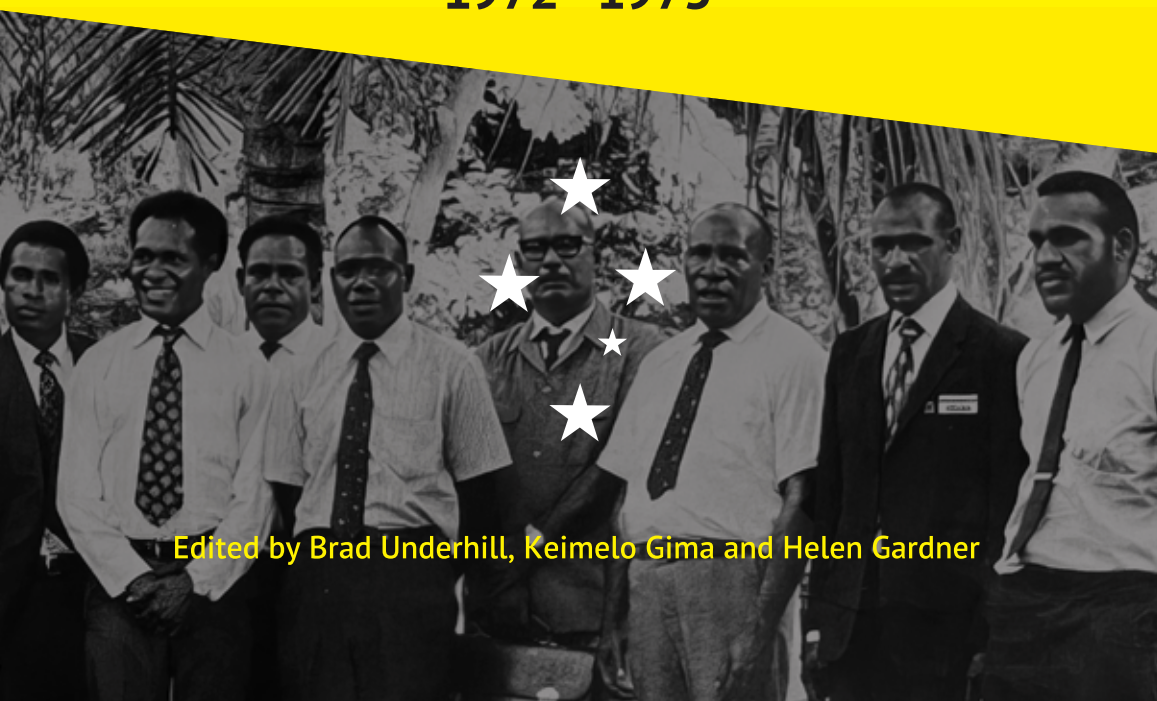
DEBATING THE NATION

Speeches from the House of Assembly 1972–1975



Edited by Brad Underhill, Keimelo Gima and Helen Gardner

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Speeches from the House of Assembly 1972–1975

Edited by Brad Underhill, Keimelo Gima and Helen Gardner

Australian High Commission
Papua New Guinea

YUMI STAP WANTAIM

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Third House: Members of the House of Assembly

Open electorates (alphabetical order by electorates)

Alotau	John Guise
Angoram	William Eichhorn
Henganofi	Bono Azanifa
Bewani	Bewa Tou
Bogia	Stanis To Liman
Bulolo	Gedisa Gwaju
Central Bougainville	Raphael Bele
Chuave	John Kaupa
Daulo	Sinake Giregire
Dei	Parua Kuri
Dreikikir	Tromble Kabai
Esa'ala	Timothy James Ward
Finschhafen	Malengu Doi
Gazelle	Matthias Toliman*
Goilala	Louis Mona
Goroko	Akepa Miakwe
Gumine	Ninkama Bomai
Hagen	Pena Ou
Henganofi	Atihemi Kimi*
Huon Gulf	Gideon Apeng
Ialibu–Pangia	Turi Wari
Ijivitari	Paulus Arek*
Jimi	Thomas Kavali
Kabwum	Buaki Singeri
Kagua-Erave	Yano Belo
Kainantu	Sasakila Moses
Kairuku–Hiri	Stanton Ronald Slaughter
Kandep–Porgera	Nenk Pasul
Kandrian–Gloucester	Galopo Masa
Karimui–Nomane	Inuabe Egaiano
Kavieng	Perry Kwan
Kerema	Tore Lokoloko
Kerowagi	Wena Wili
Kikori	Dodobai Wautai
Kokopo	Oscar Tammur
Kompiam–Baiyer	Traimya Kambipi
Koroba–Kopiago	Andagari Wabiria
Kula	John Fifita
Kundiawa	Joseph Iuanga
Lae	Tony Ila

Lagaip	Waitea Magnolius
Lufa	Suinavi Otio
Madang	Angmai Bilas
Manus	Michael Pondros
Maprik	Pita Lus
Markham	Phillip Buseng
Mendi	Momei Pangial
Menyamya	Manasseh Voeto
Middle Ramu	Kui Baiyang
Moresby Coastal	Gavera Rea
Moresby Inland	Albert Maori Kiki
Mount Wilhelm	Karigl Bonggere
Mul	Mek Nugints
Namatanai	Julius Chan
Nawae	Amenao Jongombei
Nipa	Ibne Kor
North Bougainville	Donatus Mola
North Fly	Krenem Wonhenai
Obura	Onamauta Beibi
Okapa	John Pokia
Pomio	Koriam Irikit
Poroma–Kutubu	Awali Ungunaibe
Rabaul	John Kaputin
Rai Coast	John Poe
Rigo–Abau	Reuben Taureka
Sinasina	Kobale Kale
Sohe	Stephen Tago
South Bougainville	Paul Lapun
South Fly	Ebia Olewale
Sumkar John	Maxwell Middleton
Talasea Henry	Charles Humphreys
Tambul–Nebilyer	Koitaga Mano
Tari–Komo	Matiabe Yuwi
Upper Sepik	Anskar Karmel
Usino–Bundi	Marcus Kawo
Wabag	Tei Abal
Wahgi	Kaibelt Diria
Wapei–Nuku	Yakob Talis
Wapenamanda	Pato Kakarya
West Sepik Coastal	Brere Awol
Wewak	Thomas Kieran O'Shannessy
Wosera–Gaui	John Matik
Yangoru Saussia	Matthias Yaliwan

Regional electorates (alphabetical order by electorates)

Bougainville	John Momis
Central	Josephine Abaijah

Chimbu	Iambakey Okuk
Eastern Highlands	Barry Blyth Holloway
East New Britain	Damien Kereku
East Sepik	Michael Somare
Gulf	Tom Koraea
Madang	Bruce Reginald Jephcott
Manus	Pikah Leli Kasau
Milne Bay	Dennis Charles Young
Morobe	Boyamo Sali
New Ireland	Obed Boas
Northern	Mackenzie Daugi
Southern Highlands	Ronald Thomas Dalton Neville
Western	Naipuri Maina
Western Highlands	Anton Parao
West New Britain	John Maneke
West Sepik	Joseph Paul Langro

Open electorates (alphabetical order by members)

Abal, Tei	Wabag
Apeng, Gideon	Huon Gulf
Arek, Paulus*	Ijivitari
Awol, Brere	West Sepik Coastal
Baiyang, Kui	Middle Ramu
Beibi, Onamauta	Obura
Bele, Raphael	Central Bougainville
Belo, Yano	Kagua–Erave
Bilas, Angmai	Madang
Bomai, Ninkama	Gumine
Bonggere, Karigl	Mount Wilhelm
Buseng,	Phillip Markham
Chan, Julius	Namatanai
Diria, Kaibelt	Wahgi
Doi, Malengu	Finschhafen
Egaiano, Inuabe	Karimui–Nomane
Eichhorn, William	Angoram
Fifita, John	Kula
Giregire, Sinake	Daulo
Guise, John	Alotau
Gwaju, Gedisa	Bulolo
Humphreys, Henry Charles	Talasea
Ila, Tony	Lae
Irikit, Koriam	Pomio
Iuanga, Joseph	Kundiawa
Jongombei, Amenao	Nawae
Kabai, Tromble	Dreikikir
Kakarya, Pato	Wapenamanda

Kale, Kobale	Sinasina
Kambipi, Traimya	Kompiam–Baiyer
Kaputin, John	Rabaul
Karmel, Anskar	Upper Sepik
Kaupa, John	Chuave
Kavali, Thomas	Jimi
Kawo, Marcus	Usino–Bundi
Kiki, Albert Maori	Moresby Inland
Kimi, Atihemi*	Henganofi
Kor, Ibne	Nipa
Kuri, Parua	Dei
Kwan, Perry	Kavieng
Lapun, Paul	South Bougainville
Lokoloko, Tore	Kerema
Lus, Pita	Maprik
Magnolius, Waitea	Lagaip
Mano, Koitaga	Tambul–Nebilyer
Masa, Galopo	Kandrian–Gloucester
Matik, John	Wosera–Gaui
Miakwe, Akepa	Goroko
Middleton, John Maxwell	Sumkar
Mola, Donatus	North Bougainville
Mona, Louis	Goilala
Moses, Sasakila	Kainantu
Nugints, Mek	Mul
O'Shannessy, Thomas Kieran	Wewak
Olewale, Ebia	South Fly
Otio, Suinavi	Lufa
Ou, Pena	Hagen
Pangial, Momei	Mendi
Pasul, Nenk	Kandep–Porgera
Poe, John	Rai Coast
Pokia, John	Okapa
Pondros, Michael	Manus
Rea, Gavera	Moresby Coastal
Singeri, Buaki	Kabwum
Slaughter, Stanton Ronald	Kairuku–Hiri
Tago, Stephen	Sohe
Talis, Yakob	Wapei–Nuku
Tammur, Oscar	Kokopo
Taureka, Reuben	Rigo–Abau
Toliman, Matthias*	Gazelle
Toliman, Stanis	Bogia
Tou, Bewa	Bewani
Ungunaibe, Awali	Poroma–Kutubu
Voeto, Manasseh	Menyamya
Wabiria, Andagari	Koroba–Kopiago

Ward, Timothy James	Esa'ala
Wari, Turi	Ialibu–Pangia
Wautai, Dodobai	Kikori
Wili, Wena	Kerowagi
Wonhenai, Krenem	North Fly
Yaliwan, Matthias	Yangoru Saussia
Yuwi, Matiabe	Tari–Komo

Regional electorates (alphabetical order by members)

Abaijah, Josephine	Central
Boas, Obed	New Ireland
Daugi, Mackenzie	Northern
Holloway, Barry Blyth	Eastern Highlands
Jephcott, Bruce Reginald	Madang
Kasau, Pikah Leli	Manus
Kereku, Damien	East New Britain
Koraea, Tom	Gulf
Langro, Joseph Paul	West Sepik
Maina, Naipuri	Western
Maneke, John	West New Britain
Momis, John	Bougainville
Neville, Ronald Thomas Dalton	Southern Highlands
Okuk, Iambakey	Chimbu
Parao, Anton	Western Highlands
Sali, Boyamo	Morobe
Somare, Michael	East Sepik
Young, Dennis Charles	Milne Bay

* Died in office: Matthias Toliman (succeeded by Martin Tovadek), Paulus Arek (succeeded by Sergius Arek), Atihemi Kimi (succeeded by Bono Azanifa)

Foreword

As Papua New Guinea celebrates fifty years of independence in 2025, the Australian Government has proudly supported Deakin University to prepare this vitally important historical record of Papua New Guinea's path to independence. It is fitting to preserve for future generations the words and deeds of the one hundred members of Papua New Guinea's Third House of Assembly from 1972 to 1975, who in just a matter of years guided the Territory of Papua New Guinea first to self-government in 1973, and then independence in 1975.

I acknowledge the special role played by the late Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare in that pivotal period, who more than anyone steered Papua New Guinea to nationhood. As the late Sir Michael said to the people of Papua New Guinea on 16 September 1975, independence was the result of 'years of planning, overcoming opposition, debates and hard work'. Australia's then Prime Minister, Gough Whitlam, echoed this sentiment when he said on that same day that a united and independent Papua New Guinea was 'an idea whose time had come'.

It was the visionary and tireless work of the members of the Third House of Assembly, and the members who came before them, who made this idea a reality. These extracts show the rich democratic tradition that guided Papua New Guinea's journey to independence; a tradition that remains a cornerstone value of modern Papua New Guinea.

I commend Deakin University and its partner the University of Papua New Guinea for this valuable contribution to Papua New Guinea's – and Australia's – modern history and congratulate the government and people of Papua New Guinea on its golden jubilee in 2025.

His Excellency Mr Ewen McDonald
Australian High Commissioner to Papua New Guinea
and Special Envoy for the Pacific and Regional Affairs

1.

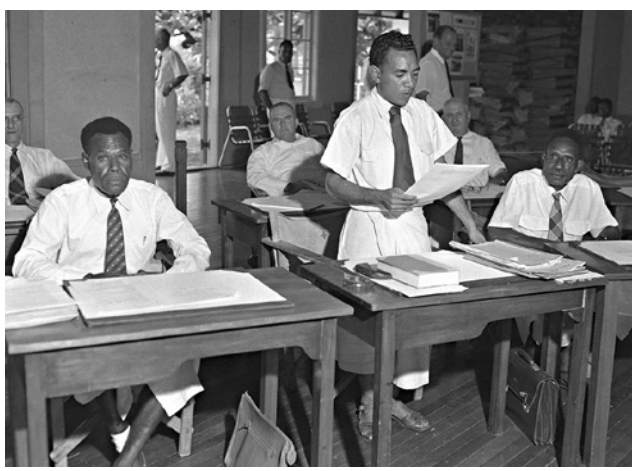
The Third House of Assembly 1972

“They entered the chamber, unaware that this was an historic moment for the nation … they would lead the Territory of Papua New Guinea first to self-government … and then to independence …

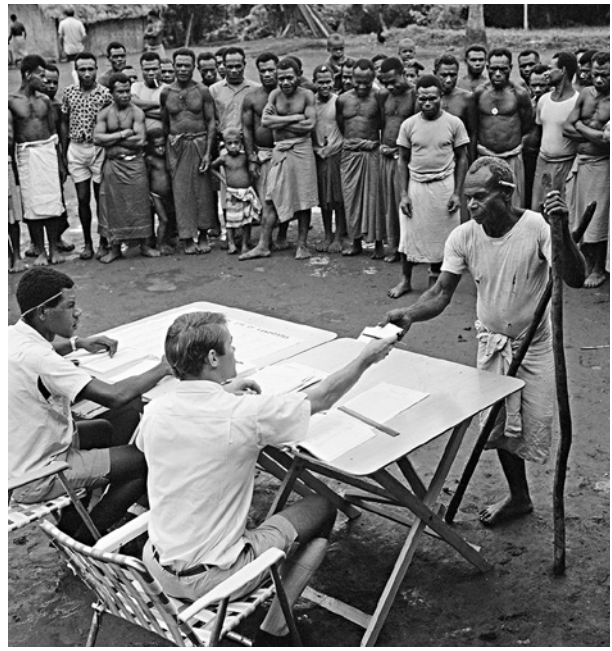
1. Voices of the nation

On 20 April 1972, one hundred newly elected members from the February elections gathered for the opening of the Third House of Assembly in Port Moresby. They entered the chamber, unaware that this was an historic moment for the nation, for over the coming months and years in the life of this House, they would lead the Territory of Papua New Guinea first to self-government in 1973, and then to independence from Australia in 1975.

Less than ten years earlier the people of Papua New Guinea voted for the first time in territory-wide elections. Adult men and women cast their votes in towns and villages along the coasts and islands and throughout the Highlands. The period of the Legislative Council, 1951–64, when a few Papua New Guineans were chosen by the administration as token representatives of the majority of the population, was over. Thirty-four members were returned in 1964, including six expatriates. Now, Papua New Guineans, chosen by their countrymen and women, could outvote the ten administrators and ten white businessmen and clergy who held reserved places in the assembly. Those elected learned the procedures of the House and the expectations of representatives. The best of them were made assistants to ministers and spent their time learning the ropes of government.



Left to right: *Mr Pita Simogun (Sepik), Mr Mahuru Rarua-Rarua (Papua), Mr John Vuia, (Gazelle) addressing the Papua and New Guinea Legislative Council, 1959*
NAA: 7803995



Papua and New Guinea elections – a visit to Arumbum, 1968
NAA: 9030444

The expanded Second House, elected in 1968, returned eighty-four members from open and regional electorates. The official members remained at ten. Political parties appeared. The Pangu Pati, founded in June 1967 on a platform of early independence, was the prompt for others to organise. The All People's Party formed in opposition to Pangu, as did the Territory Country Party, eventually the United Party, which brought together planters and largely Highlanders to oppose or slow down self-government.

The Third House was divided along party lines. Under the leadership of Mr Tei Abal and Mr Matthias Toliman, the United Party won the most seats and expected to form government. But Mr Michael Somare negotiated a coalition government led by the Pangu Pati. Mr Iambakey Okuk brought his Highlands-based National Party to the Somare Coalition. The Mataungan Party from East New Britain accepted Somare's invitation as did Mr Julius Chan, who added his eleven members of the People's Progress Party. Thus, with a very slim majority, Somare prepared to form government.

While a number of seasoned politicians were re-elected in 1972, many were first-time representatives and younger than their predecessors – the average age was thirty-five. Mr Michael Somare was about to turn thirty-seven when he led his coalition of parties into the House. Mr

Julius Chan was thirty-three when he handed down the first budget by a Papua New Guinean. While twenty-six had no formal schooling, the members were still better educated than those who had come before; thirty-seven had some post-primary education. Miss Josephine Abaijah, the single woman elected, was among the most highly educated of all, with diplomas from London and the Philippines.

Members had much to do to prepare the territory for nationhood. Some of the trappings of the nation were already in place; the flag was chosen in 1971, but key institutions were still to be established. The Central Bank of Papua New Guinea was legislated in 1973 and the kina was released in April 1975. The localisation of the public service began in the late 1960s, but under the 'gearing up' of the Australian administration, Papua New Guineans increasingly took more senior roles in government departments. Key national policies shaped the nation to come. The Eight-Point Plan appeared in its earliest form in 1972. Mr Julius Chan's budget in the same year was a moment of great pride for the House and the territory.

The crucial task for the Third House was the writing and implementation of the Papua New Guinea Constitution, continuing the work which began in the previous Houses. This was undertaken by the Constitutional Planning Committee formed from representatives of all the parties that met first in 1972 and then frequently throughout the life of the House. Constitutional discussions took up most of the sitting days of 1974.

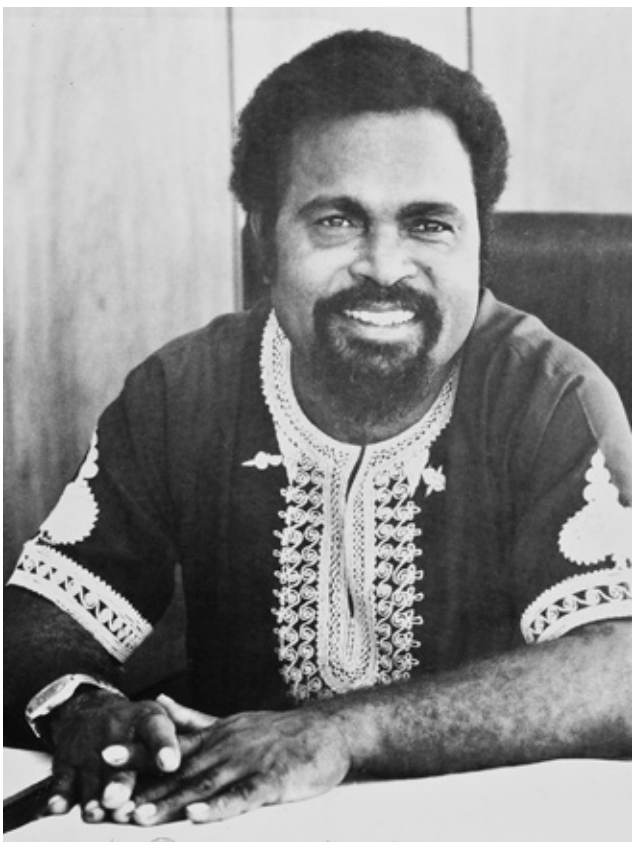
The United Party was not convinced the country was ready to rule itself and members were concerned that Papua New Guinea would fail through lack of expertise. The Coalition, by contrast, was optimistic that Papua New Guinea was prepared. Somare felt that continued Australian rule would sap the confidence of the people and keep crucial decisions in the hands of those who ultimately had no future in the country.

Whether they sought it or not, all the members knew that Australia and the United Nations

> "While a number of seasoned politicians were re-elected in 1972, many were first-time representatives and younger than their predecessors – the average age was thirty-five.

“

Mr Speaker, I, as the leader of the National Coalition am very happy indeed that you have been elected to the office of Speaker … But you must remain impartial in your role of Speaker.



Chief Minister Mr (later Sir) Michael Somare (later the Right Honourable Grand Chief, Prime Minister 1975–80, 1982–85, 2002–10, 2011)

Bill and Jan Gammage collection of Papua New Guinea posters, Pacific Manuscripts Bureau Photo 47-24

were keen to see independence sooner rather than later. The pace increased after Gough Whitlam took the Australian Labor Party to victory following the elections of December 1972. Still, in April 1972, no date for self-government or independence had been proposed or accepted. Members took their seats unaware that they would take the country from territory to nation in the life of the House, that in a mere three and a half years they would welcome dignitaries from around the world to celebrate the independence of Papua New Guinea and watch the Australian flag being lowered for the last time.

1.1 Mr Michael Somare's Coalition forms government

The election of the Speaker at the opening of the first session on the first day showed the tight margin between the Coalition and the United Party. The Coalition nominated the member for Kavieng, Mr Perry Kwan, who stood against Mr Matthias Toliman from the United Party. Mr Kwan was elected by forty-nine votes to forty-eight and held the chair until June 1972 when he relinquished it to Mr Barry Holloway (Eastern Highlands). Mr Michael Somare had the numbers to form government and as Chief Minister he and Mr Tei Abal (Wabag) of the United Party congratulated Mr Kwan and reminded him of his responsibilities.

20 April 1972, p. 3

Mr Tei Abal (Wabag)

Mr Speaker, on behalf of the United Party's 44 members and other honourable members, I am pleased to congratulate you on becoming the new Speaker. You know full well that in our Parliament we have two groups of members; those who speak only Pidgin and those who speak English.

Since you are now our elected Speaker, you are required to be impartial. You are not to favour one of these two groups for you might serve one and neglect the other. This could result in great disappointment. We will have a harmonious working relationship in this House of Assembly if you remain impartial in your approach, and this will encourage us to work together to build this country. Once more I extend to you my sincere congratulations.

Mr Michael Somare (East Sepik)

Mr Speaker, I, as the leader of the National Coalition, am very happy indeed that you have been elected to the office of Speaker. Yours is the hand that will have to steer, to direct and to control this canoe, this House of Assembly towards national development. But you must remain impartial in your role of Speaker.

1.2 Speech by His Excellency the Governor-General

Sir Paul Hasluck, Governor-General of Australia, opened the first session of the Third House, adding a special flavour to the occasion. As Minister for Territories under the Liberal–Country Coalition from 1951 to 1963, Hasluck implemented the United Nations Trust Territory Agreement for the development of the territory of New Guinea – and Papua by proxy – as the two territories were merged for administrative purposes in 1949. As the long-term minister, Hasluck was the most influential expatriate in the post-war development of Papua New Guinea.

20 April 1972, pp. 4–5

Sir Paul Hasluck

Members of the House of Assembly, today marks another stage in the progressive development of the Papua New Guinea legislature from a body composed mainly of appointed members into an elected parliament with full authority to make laws and to vote its executive into and out of office.

The Legislative Council and the First and Second Houses of Assembly have all contributed to this development. Select Committees appointed by them have consulted the people and have prepared reports which reflect the wishes of the people. The reports have been debated and the recommendations endorsed by members have been put into effect by the Australian Parliament. This House, more than any other, bears the imprint of opinion in Papua New Guinea.

The policy of the Australian Government towards Papua New Guinea has been declared to the Second House of Assembly as well as in the Australian Parliament and in the United Nations.

Australia will continue to observe its obligations under the United Nations Charter

– to promote the political, economic, educational and social advancement of Papua New Guinea in accordance with the freely expressed wishes of the people.

It is the policy of my Government to encourage the movement towards self-government but not to impose self-government upon Papua New Guinea. To this end my Government looks to this House to represent the wishes of the majority of the people and to take the initiative on the pace and nature of constitutional development.

My Government responded to the recommendation of the Select Committee on Constitutional Development, endorsed by the Second House of Assembly, that the development of Papua New Guinea be geared to the achievement of self-government in the lifetime of the Third House of Assembly. To this end, a growing number of Papuan and New Guinean public servants is being trained in special courses both here and in Australia to fit them for important positions at all levels of the Public Service.

The retention of expatriate staff for as long as their assistance is required is receiving further attention and will be discussed with the Administrator's Executive Council before being placed before this House. A programme has been prepared of the legislative and administrative actions which will have to be taken by Australia and by Papua New Guinea by the time of self-government.

My Government intends to invite Papua New Guinea's political leaders, once they have taken office, to join in early discussions about these matters.

> "In its resolution on Papua New Guinea in December 1971 the General Assembly of the United Nations stressed the development of Papua New Guinea as a single political and territorial entity.

This House will be asked to consider before long many important policy matters. Some of these still fall within the responsibility of the Australian Government. On others, this House already has the authority to make the final decision.

The examination of the legal system may well be one of the most important tasks of the House.

The judges and magistrates and their courts are essential for maintaining the rule of law and protection of the rights of the individual. It is also necessary that they apply laws which will take root in this country.

My Government will encourage the House of Assembly to give attention to the question of citizenship.

The prosperity of Papua New Guinea as a whole and the well-being of individuals and small communities depend to a large extent on making productive use of land. Members will be asked to consider legislation to give greater security in land ownership and thus encourage better use of the country's land resources.

This House will be in a position to assess present policies on education, urban development and conservation, and to contribute to the solution of social problems normal in a rapidly changing society, including the effect of development on traditional customs and culture.

My Government has contributed very large resources of money and skilled men and women to Papua New Guinea's economic advancement in order to put its people more firmly in control of their own affairs and, in time, to reduce its dependence on outside aid.

This House is well fitted to decide the form of development best suited to the needs and wishes of the people in the future. The Administration will table in the House this year a White Paper on the strategies for a new national development programme to be introduced in 1973. This will enable the House to discuss the main issues fully before the programme is drawn up. It is the hope of my advisers that this programme will be shaped by, and bear the clear imprint of, this House and will win, through the efforts of members in their own electorates, the support of the people.

The new programme will depend heavily on outside aid. My Government confirms its undertaking that the movement to self-government will not affect its intention to continue providing large-scale aid.

Papua New Guinea and Australia share responsibility for the Public Service. My Government is undertaking a review of the Public Service Ordinance. Amending legislation will be placed before the House of Assembly, which in respect of this important area of government, also will be in a position to examine the principles on which

the present Ordinance is based.

Australia is responsible for the defence of Papua New Guinea and accepts that obligation. The Pacific Islands Regiment and the Papua New Guinea Division of the Royal Australian Navy are being steadily developed, including the necessary personnel, organisational and administrative requirements, to meet the needs of an emerging independent nation. Australian support in matters of defence will continue.

In its resolution on Papua New Guinea in December 1971 the General Assembly of the United Nations stressed the development of Papua New Guinea as a single political and territorial entity. It urged further that separatist movements be discouraged and the unity of the country be preserved through the period leading up to independence.

In the eyes of the world outside, Papua New Guinea already has a distinctive character as a developing nation. The last House of Assembly showed its concern for national unity by declaring that unity is essential to the progress of Papua New Guinea as a modern state, with enough resources and population to sustain a developing economy. My Government holds the same view.

Members of the House of Assembly the decisions which will shape the destiny of Papua New Guinea are largely in your hands. I leave you to your deliberations.

On the second day of the House sittings, a special message from the Catholic Bishop was read out to the House.

24 April 1972, pp. 9–10

The Catholic Bishops of Papua New Guinea assembled at their annual conference send their warm congratulations to our elected leaders and people on the occasion of the opening of the Third House of Assembly. The Church strongly supports the legitimate political aspirations of the people, and therefore rejoices in the growth of Papua New Guinea towards nationhood.

The immediate years ahead hold out a tremendous challenge – let us meet it together: a challenge to build up a nation based on a common sense of purpose and unity. This challenge will demand hard work and self-sacrifice, patience and a spirit of partnership among all of us living in this country.

Today we pray God to guide the members of the new House

of Assembly. We enter the future with a strong sense of hope and trust knowing the God the creator of our country and father of us all will be with us.
Respectfully
Signd Leo Arkfeld
Conference of Catholic Bishops

The House as a whole thanked the Governor-General for his speech. Mr John Kaputin (East New Britain) replied to His Excellency the Governor-General on behalf of the House.

24 April 1972, p. 10

... May it please Your Excellency,

We, Her Majesty's Loyal Subjects, the members of the House of Assembly of Papua New Guinea, in House assembled, desire to thank Your Excellency for the Speech which you were pleased to address to the House. The visit of Your Excellency to Port Moresby has made this day a memorable one and is a source of great pleasure to the people of Papua New Guinea.

1.3 Responses to the Governor-General's speech

While the Governor-General's speech was well received, his conflicting statements that self-government and independence should be decided within the Territory, followed by his insistence that self-government would come 'in the lifetime of the third House of Assembly' was seized on by members of the United Party as a betrayal of the Australian Government's promise that the timing for sovereignty was a matter for the people of Papua New Guinea. The comments added to the sting among United Party members at their failure to form government. The debate fell into two camps: Coalition support for early self-government and United Party efforts to delay.

Mr Tom Koraea (Gulf) celebrated the excitement of forming a new nation for a new time, while warning of the dangers of disunity.

24 April 1972, p. 12

Mr Speaker, I would like to speak briefly about the speech made by His Excellency the Governor-General of Australia, Sir Paul Hasluck.

Mr Speaker, my country, Papua New Guinea, now stands for freedom. Our time of the stone age, tribal age and colonial age has gone: now we are standing

for freedom. I mean we are now ready to look after our own people …

… One of the major parties in this House, Mr Speaker, opposes self-government, I think. But we must realise that it was clearly stated by His Excellency the Governor-General of Australia that in this House of Assembly we should achieve self-government.

Mr Speaker, His Excellency also spoke about national unity. This is the key to the progress of Papua New Guinea as a modern state, with enough resources and population to sustain a developing economy. In this Third House of Assembly I do not want to see any non-indigenous members bringing in motions suggesting the secession of Papua from New Guinea, as it was said clearly that we want national unity. …

Sir Paul Hasluck and Speaker Mr Perry Kwan, 'May I show you the way', Papua New Guinea Post Courier*, 21 April 1972,* National Library of Australia <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article250271742>

The Independent, Miss Josephine Abaijah (Central), the only woman elected, and with a large majority, stood on a platform of Papuan separatism. She believed that delaying independence offered the chance to consider alternatives to a single unified nation and warned members that they were in danger of being manipulated by the Australian government.

24 April 1972, p. 11

As an Independent member, I would say that this Government requires a lot of experience both as ministers and as a Parliament, before it can possibly be in a position to make a decision which could vitally affect the future of our country … The Australian Government could be playing a cat and mouse game with an inexperienced government; it may be ready to thrust any sort of plan on this country that will free Australia of its obligations and further Australia's immediate short-term political aspirations.

… These new colonial papas are trying to suggest that self-government at any cost and under any condition will be good. There are many alternatives within self-government and in independence. All these alternatives must be carefully considered. People who offer no alternatives are only humbugs and are dangerous to the country. The national status of such places as Bougainville, the Trust Territory of New Guinea, and Papua has to be considered.

Members of the United Party lined up to condemn Hasluck's proposal of self-government during the life of the Third House and expressed their disappointment with the formation of the Coalition. Highlander Mr Matiabe Yuwi (Tari–Komo) – felt the Governor-General was disregarding the views of the people with his timing for self-government.

24 April 1972, pp. 13–14

Mr Speaker, I sincerely thank the Governor-General of Australia for coming along to open our Third House of Assembly and for the sentiments which he expressed in his speech. Unfortunately I do not agree with some of the ideas contained in his speech. The reason for my displeasure is that he wants to grant immediate self-government to our House of Assembly. This is not in line with what the people want. I personally think that the

Australian Government is afraid of the minority in this country which speaks too loudly and demands to be heard. This is why Australia is ready to hand over immediate power, immediate self-government. I am not happy about this attitude. …

Mr Paulus Arek (Ijivitari), made the point that the Coalition was a legitimate government formed from a majority of members of the House of Assembly.

24 April 1972, p. 14

Mr Speaker and honourable members, I understand that we are speaking in Reply to the address of His Excellency the Governor-General of Australia. On the floor of this House the

> “
> … These new colonial papas are trying to suggest that self-government at any cost and under any condition will be good. There are many alternatives within self-government and in independence.

debate on the address has turned into a political campaign. The part of the Governor-General's speech I would like to throw some light on is that self-government would come to Papua New Guinea when the majority of its people want it. Our democratic system of government has permitted the formation of a coalition of political parties to form a government.

United Party founder Mr Sinake Giregire (Daulo) reminded the House of the coming election in Australia and the possible consequences for Papua New Guinea.

24 April 1972, p. 18

The Liberal–Country Party is at present the Government of Australia. Who can know whether the Labor Party will become the Government. It has said that if it becomes the Government of Australia, then it will give immediate self-government or independence. However, I wish to make it clear to the House of Assembly that the Australian Government does not have the power to make this decision. It is a decision for

the House of Assembly. If the Australian Government wishes to give us self-government or independence, it must have good reason for doing so before it acts. The Labor Government of Australia does not control Papua New Guinea.

Mr Ninkama Bomai (Gumine) laid out the material conditions necessary, in his mind, for self-government.

24 April 1972, p. 19

... When you fly in a plane, you can see the high mountains where Papua joins New Guinea. If you want self-government now, you should assist these people to move to towns or to obtain better conditions. We should build roads and bridges, and teach them to run their own businesses so that they can earn money. When you have done this, then I think the time for self-government will have arrived. ... The people of this country are not wild pigs for you to kill and eat: they are my people. My people elected me, Mr Speaker. I am the same as the people who plant sweet potato in mountainous areas. You must think about it carefully. The people voted me into this House of Parliament. I believe we should represent the people's wishes in this House. If the people want self-government delayed do not follow your own ideas and move for early self-government. We are not small monkeys, wild dogs, etc., which can be shoved until this afternoon or tomorrow and then be ruined. Who will be embarrassed, Mr Speaker? You will be very embarrassed. When members work for immediate self-government they are not representing the views of the village people. We have a lot of time.

In his response to the Governor-General, Mr Michael Pondros (Manus) gave a history lesson on the colonisation of his island and the sale of land 'for pieces of cloth'. He referred also to the poverty of the people and their inadequate wages when compared to politicians.

24 April 1972, p. 36

Mr Speaker I thank the Governor-General for what he said in his speech. ... I do not criticise anyone, black or white or others.

I only intend to express the views of my people of Manus in this House. According to early history Papua New Guinea was discovered by the Germans. The town of Port Moresby was named by a white man. It is not a local name. I was not born during this time. I am sure that if our country had been built up in a proper way in the first instance, it would now be like any other Pacific country. In 1946, after the Second World War, all the other Pacific islands were already developed. Papua New Guinea was the last one to be developed and as a result of this Papua New Guinea is lagging behind all the other Pacific islands. My people feel that when the Germans discovered Papua New Guinea, English people came and when they left Australians came and others began pouring into Papua New Guinea. When the early settlers arrived here they mistreated my people. Almost all the land in my area was bought with pieces of cloth. This is the main concern of my people. My people were treated as slaves. When plantations were started my forefathers were employed. Now we try to operate those plantations ourselves, but we just are not given the chance. It has become very difficult for us to take over these plantations. When I left school I joined the Administration and worked for fourteen years with the Department of Social Development and Home Affairs. When I joined the Administration I was receiving $1.50 per fortnight. Before I contested the elections I was receiving $32 per fortnight. This was inadequate. There are people from all the districts working in Lorengau and their wages are very low. These people are mostly concerned about their wages. … I represent the Manus Workers Association in the trade union movement. I have fought for higher wages for the workers in Lorengau.

Responding to the Governor-General, Fr John Momis (Bougainville) argued for a future bound to the cultures and the true nature of Papua New Guinea. He warned the House that rapid development might allow foreign capital to create a new form of imperialism in the country.

27 April 1972, pp. 69–70

On behalf of the people of my electorate, Bougainville, I wish to express appreciation for assurances contained in the

Mr Tei Abal

The Australian Trusteeship, Papua New Guinea, 1945–75, Ian Downs, Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1980, between pp. 310–11

Governor-General's speech of continued assistance to Papua New Guinea until independence and after. Whether we are ready for self-government or independence is not the issue in question to me. The crucial problem which the leaders of this country face at this stage is how effectively we can influence change to achieve true Papua New Guinea development. And this is indeed a difficult task which needs the co-operation of our educators, Australians and other people who are interested in this country, and the leaders of Papua New Guinea themselves.

I think we have to be very careful, that, because time is against us, we do not go for this so-called 'rapid economic development' at the expense of other values. We have to examine our priorities before we set up systems to achieve these values and our objectives. I was very pleased that the

Governor-General in his speech stated the Australian policy of continued assistance, economic assistance and assistance in other fields, but I would like to see a different structure of foreign aid being poured into this country because I feel that unless foreign aid is controlled to effect true Papua New Guinea development you will have building up in this country economic imperialism. We may become politically independent but because we are so eager to effect development or economic development we become slaves [f]or a foreign economic imperialism. So I would like to see foreign aid, or economic assistance, coming into this country in the form of trade relations which respect the autonomy of this country and which would encourage more self-reliance by Papua New Guinea economically, instead of causing us to depend on Australia's charity or any other country's charity. We would not like to be mere beneficiaries. We would like to contribute to the economic development of this country. ...

... I personally would like to see a uniform standard of living and salary, with, of course, overseas allowances for our overseas experts – and others.

1.4 The ministers are announced

The United Party sought to delay the nomination of the ministers to the Administrator's Executive Council. Mr Paul Langro (West Sepik) moved a motion for members to return to their districts and seek confirmation on whether self-government should go ahead. If not, then the ministry should be chosen from all members of the House, essentially a single party House. Following debate, the motion failed fifty-four to forty-two. Chief Minister Michael Somare nominated the ministry.

26 April 1972, p. 57

Ministerial Offices – Nominations

Mr Michael Somare (East Sepik) – I move – That this House nominates for appointment to ministerial offices the following persons, ... after consultation between His Honour the Administrator and the Ministerial Nominations Committee of this House as the list of elected members eligible to be nominated by the House for such appointment, namely:

Mr Michael Somare	Chief Minister
Mr John Guise	Minister for the Interior
Mr Julius Chan	Minister for Internal Finance
Mr lambakey Okuk	Minister for Agriculture, Stock and Fisheries
Mr Donatus Mola	Minister for Business Development
Mr Ebla Olewale	Minister of Education
Mr Sasakila Moses	Minister for Forests
Dr Reuben Taureka	Minister for Health
Mr Paulus Arek	Minister for Information
Mr Gavera Rea	Minister for Labour
Mr Albert Maori-Kiki	Minister for Lands and Environment
Mr Boyamo Sali	Minister for Local Government
Mr Paul Lapun	Minister for Mines
Mr Kalbelt Diria	Minister for Posts and Telegraphs
Mr John Poe	Minister for Trade and Industry
Mr Bruce Jephcott	Minister for Transport
Mr Thomas Kavali	Minister for Works

Mr Speaker, … These men, I personally feel, have the calibre to work in this ministry and I am sure, sir, that these men have been in all walks of life and these men have Papua New Guinea at heart …

As you can see from this ministerial nomination list, Sir, we did not emphasise regionalism or any parochialism at all. We picked people because we feel these are men who will be running the Government of this country, and they form a true representation for national government. The people that you see in the ministry are from all communities, different districts and various regions. We have people who are in this ministry and not necessarily from one particular area.

While the United Party was disappointed, there was civility in the House and members congratulated Somare and the new ministers. Mr Matthias Toliman, who was soon to be named the Leader of the Opposition, was sorry East New Britain was not represented in the ministry.

26 April 1972, p. 58

Mr Matthias to Liman (Gazelle) – Mr Speaker, I too would like to congratulate the new ministry and Mr Somare. Mr Somare is often my political enemy, but socially he is a good friend of mine. I wish him luck. However I am sorry not to see a Tolai in the ministry. I think the present situation in our area is important. I have conferred with the leaders of the coalition in the hope of including one Tolai in the ministry but none of us were given a ministerial position.

27 April 1972, p. 68

Mr Pena Ou (Hagen)

We, in the United Party, are next in line. Whatever our needs may be, we will look to you for help and explanations to our problems. We will not be your enemies but we will be your allies. Many of our major considerations must be focused at the district level. We must think of our people back home in the villages – how they live and how they are trying to better themselves. Self-government will soon be with us and now is an appropriate moment for us to explain this big move to our Army as well as our Navy, and encourage economic development through the country. If we do this our country will not fail in years to come. The new Government will also rule the country peacefully and everybody will be happy.

I call upon the new ministers who are about to take up their portfolios always to be responsive to the problems and worries of the people of Papua New Guinea, whether they be in the Highlands, the New Guinea coast or islands, or in Papua. We are one family and we want to make this country a better place to life in.

> “
> … I call upon the new ministers … to be responsive to the problems and worries of the people of Papua New Guinea … We are one family and we want to make this country a better place …

“

Mr Speaker … These men, I personally feel, have the calibre to work in this ministry and I am sure … have Papua New Guinea at heart …

Ministers of the first Somare Coalition Government, 1972; left to right: *Thomas Kavali, Julius Chan, Reuben Taureka, John Poe, Bruce Jephcott, Michael Somare, Paulus Arek, Paul Lapun, Gavera Rea, Boyamo Sali, Ebia Olewale, Albert Maori Kiki, Donatus Mola, John Guise, Kaibelt Diria, Sasakila Moses, Iambakey Okuk*

Playing the game: life and politics in Papua New Guinea, Sir Julius Chan, Brisbane: University of Queensland Press, between pp. 88–9

1.5 Mr Michael Somare announces the date for self-government

On 5 September 1972, following months of debates about the timing of self-government and independence and whether or not the people wanted it, Chief Minister Mr Michael Somare (East Sepik) tried to bring the discussion to a close. He proposed 1 December 1973 as the date for self-government.

5 September 1972, pp. 586–7

I move – That the following amendment be made: That the following words be added to the motion: 'and – (a) requests that constitutional changes necessary for full internal self-government be brought into effect on 1 December 1973, or as soon as possible thereafter; (b) interprets full internal self-government for Papua New Guinea as leaving with the Commonwealth of Australia final powers only in the matters of defence and external affairs, which it should exercise in the fullest consultation with the Government of Papua New Guinea …'

> "Many people claim that we are power hungry and want immediate changes. Experts tell us that economic development and political development must go hand in hand.

Many people claim that we are power hungry and want immediate changes. Experts tell us that economic development and political development must go hand in hand. We cannot separate one from the other. Mr Speaker, if your country has power then the Government can make big decisions. If the country wishes to make a large contract with some overseas body, then the Government can sign the contract in the light of the wishes of the people … Mr Speaker, I know that when we discuss change, many members say if we say we will wait, then copper might be found at Mount Hagen. You might be deceived and sign a contract which will give you a small return. …

Consider Mendi – Mr Matiabe

Yuwi should listen to this. If you go to Mendi, how much local ownership is there? Go to Mount Hagen, to all areas, to my area, Wewak. Where are the businesses owned by Papua New Guineans? What I suggest is that we do not act like bulldozers and give others no chance. We would like our people to have the chance to influence decisions. It is time that we elected members showed some leadership. In the past outsiders have said: 'Come on, push this truck. Come on, do this'. We have only replied: 'Yes, sir, yes, sir'. Mr Speaker, that time is now over. It is high time that the people of this country held their heads high. Papua New Guinean people must hold their heads high and have pride in their country. If not now, when? If you do not agree, you are stupid. We are not trying to change things with excessive haste. I have heard some members say we must go and ask the people. I would like to know how often Australian politicians go to their electorates and ask each woman and child about what they want or about their views on changes. Will the Honourable Members for Sumkar and the Southern Highlands inform me? They come from Australia and they know. How many Australian politicians go to their electorates and poll individual opinions? Will the Honourable Leader of the Opposition inform me?

Mr Matthias to Liman

This is Papua New Guinea, not Australia.

The debate on Somare's amendment resumed on 18 September. Many from the United Party felt that hastening self-government threatened the stability of the nation. Over the sitting days of 18 and 22 Sept the debate continued until the Coalition won the vote to pass the amendment 52 to 34. The *Post-Courier* noted of that day in parliament:

> People milled in the corridors and the public gallery and every other viewing space was packed because on the floor history was about to be made. Everyone knew that it was the night Papua New Guinea would be given a date for self-government. (*Post-Courier,* 22 September 1972).

Despite Mr Somare's attempts, the Opposition continued to reject early self-government.

18 September 1972, p. 661

Mr Ibne Kor (Nipa)

Thank you, Mr Speaker. The Chief Minister has introduced a motion on self-government and I am glad to see such a step taken. However I am sure the people from the Southern Highlands and other parts of this Territory of Papua New Guinea do not want self-government at this stage. Most of my people only know the term self-government, but in actual fact they do not know what it means. Some of them think that it is only the name of a man and others think that it is the name of a woman. My people really make it clear that they do not know the meaning of self-government. Consequently they would rather have self-government in 1976 or even two years later. … These latter people think that if we have self-government in 1973 it will not take very long before we run into trouble. These people do not want to hurry the move towards self-government.

The Coalition rallied but the debates continued.

18 September 1972, p. 665

Mr Kaibelt Diria (Wahgi – Minister for Posts and Telegraphs)

We must all support the 1973 date. Self-government is no different to the local government councils. Some of you here have had the privilege of becoming presidents of your local government councils and you should not suppress the valuable experience you absorbed when you exercised leadership in your councils. Therefore you should not retreat, but advance and accept responsibility in our self-governing tomorrow.

18 September 1972, p. 665

Mr Mackenzi Daugi (Northern) –

Mr Speaker, I would like to support the principle of the motion, but not the date. Mr Speaker, this country is entering into rapid political change. No one will ever deny that Papua New Guinea is striding towards nationhood and that the pace of political development taking place in this country is

tremendous. No other under-developed country in the world has moved as rapidly as this towards self-government. Some districts have had longer contact with civilisation than others. Our society is being reshaped in some districts but in the recently contacted areas tribalism and regional feelings still exist.

... Self-government cannot be avoided. This is one of the stages of the political development of our country. It is an unavoidable item. Many members of the loyal Opposition do not oppose self-government. They are expressing the true wishes of their electorates and there are many from the Government benches who do this also. I do not understand, Mr Speaker, why the Government, namely this Parliament, does not respect the work its committee did. The select Committee of the last House recommended that Papua New Guinea should achieve internal self-government in 1975. The last House endorsed this. I understand that was a majority decision. This Parliament should develop the country politically to reach that goal in 1975. It is too much to expect the villagers to accept self-government in 1973. I think we are confusing them.

Minister for Education Mr Ebia Olewale (South Fly) argued self-government was already in place; he warned that the territory must be ready for a Labor victory in Australia (the election was held on 2 December 1972). Members of the House knew that whatever their position on self-government, an Australian Labor Government would carry out their plans for a rapid handover and early independence.

18 September 1972, p. 669

> “Most of my people only know the term self-government, but in actual fact they do not know what it means. Some of them think that it is only the name of a man and others think that it is the name of a woman.

As far as I am concerned, Mr Speaker, we are debating a dead issue. We already have self-government. What are we arguing about? I would like to speak from the experience that I now have as Minister for Education. As far as I am concerned, in the Department of

Education the final word comes from me. If I do not agree to anything, schools or whatever things concern the Department of Education in Papua New Guinea, then that thing does not happen. This seems to me to be self-government. …

The Chief Minister has clearly stated what self-government means for Papua New Guinea. We will still leave external affairs and defence in the hands of the Australian Government. That is very clear. Why should we be afraid of running our own country by ourselves with the things that are happening here and are affecting us every day? Why should we be afraid? Anybody who is afraid of managing our own affairs is not a man. Such a person should not be in this Parliament if he is not a man. We are in this Parliament as men to lead our country. … Where is that strength in you to tell your people who do not know about self-government that you will go and lead them?

> “
> … one of the major parties in the Australian Parliament … [will be] the government next year … [Labor] will grant us self-government right away … I think that a lot us here should be prepared for this eventuality.

There is a reality that we must remember. There is to be a federal election in Australia very soon, maybe next month. The Prime Minister has not announced the date yet. We do not know which party will be the Government, but we happen to know that one of the major parties in the Australian Parliament has already stated that this country should have self-government now. It so happens that one of these parties, if it is the government next year, it will grant us self-government right away. How are we going to resist? After all Australia still holds constitutional and final powers on the things that are happening here. What are we going to do? Are we going to panic? I think that a lot us here should be prepared for this eventuality. We cannot just sit and say that we should not have self-government and so not be prepared for it.

Miss Josephine Abaijah (Central) suggested that the Coalition was playing into Australia’s hands by pushing for early self-government.

19 September 1972, pp. 687–8

… The basic attitudes that govern all Australian policies towards Papua New Guinea are to get rid of their colonial embarrassment as quickly as possible and to dump their Territory of Papua – including their Papuan Australian citizens – as a destitute colony of the Trust Territory of New Guinea.

… The Australian Government considers that a spoonful of sugar will make the medicine go down with the politically unsophisticated Papuans and New Guineans. It thinks that it can push us towards its ultimate goal of independence and Self-Government. It thinks that it can push us towards its ultimate goal of independence and freedom of responsibility as quickly as it likes. It thinks it can grease us with political gimmicks into accepting exactly what it wants us to accept.

… I consider that we should not let our colonial masters dictate, by one way or another, everything that we do. The life of this Parliament should be devoted to getting the best possible conditions for internal self-government for Papua New Guinea and not devote it to fulfilling the short-term political aspirations of our colonial masters.

“
… The Australian Government considers that a spoonful of sugar will make the medicine go down with the politically unsophisticated Papuans and New Guineans …

While the Liberal–National Coalition in Australia promised that Papua New Guinea would receive 60 per cent of Australian foreign aid, Mr Matthias Toliman (Gazelle), now formally the Leader of the Opposition, feared that this might be overturned following the next election. He believed that the Australian Labor Party's position on Papua New Guinea independence meant their debates on the question of timing would be irrelevant to the outcome.

19 September 1972, pp. 697–8

Mr Speaker, we know that Australia has certain obligations to this country under the United Nations Trusteeship Charter, but we also know that Australia, no matter which government is in

power, would like to relinquish these responsibilities as quickly as possible; and the coalition's headlong grasp for power is making it very easy for it to do. All the promises of continuing aid we get are very fine and I am sure the Australian Government means them sincerely, but as we have said, ministers and governments change. What do we have in writing? What solid and binding agreement do we have that, if we assume further powers and responsibilities, there will be continued aid to enable us to carry out these functions without detriment to our development?

The Labor Party in Australia may become the next government. Though we may have been debating the pros and cons of self-government in Papua New Guinea, in the event of the Labor Party's gaining power in Australia, all our hard-fought arguments will be futile. This question appears to have been already decided for Papua New Guinea for, whether we like it or not, the Labor Party has stated its policy as self-government in 1973.

1.6 Mr Julius Chan delivers the budget

The localisation of the Public Service was proceeding under the 'gearing up' plans of the Australian government. A significant moment in the handing of the torch from Australian administrators to Papua New Guinea Nationals was when Mr (later Sir) Julius Chan, (Minister for Internal Finance), delivered the first budget to be handed down by a Papua New Guinean.

29 August 1972, p. 439

Mr Julius Chan (Namatanai – Minister For Internal Finance)

... This moment has a special place in history in that the duty of presenting the Appropriation Bill has been passed on to an elected representative of this Parliament. Along with the dramatic changes which have taken place in the past several months, this represents another significant phase of political development – it is indeed a clear expression of the way in which elected members are assuming new and broader responsibilities. ... It is with great honour, therefore, that I present the budget proposals for the financial year 1972–73 for

consideration by this House.

In summary the Budget provides for receipts and expenditure – excluding allowances for overseas officers – of $222.65 million, an increase of over 10 per cent as compared with 1971–72.

p. 441

... The important consideration is that our policies and actions must be right for Papua New Guinea at this time. This means that the Government must keep in close touch with the people so that it is aware of what these right actions and policies are.

One further point needs to be made. Papua New Guinea must increasingly look to its own resources in the future

The Minister for Internal Finance in the Somare Coalition, Mr (later Sir) Julius Chan (later Prime Minister, 1980–92, 1994–97) in Sydney in 1981 with Liberal minister Andrew Peacock, who had supported self-government for Papua New Guinea.
NAA: 11862851

to finance its policies and programmes. We must look for ways to ensure that Papua New Guinea is able to pay its own way to the greatest extent possible. For this reason it is time we examined carefully the path to progress which we have followed to date to see whether changes are appropriate. I have indicated that problems do exist and that the Government is aware of these problems and proposes to do something about them. The way we choose to meet them will be the way we feel is most appropriate for this country at this time.

It is with those thoughts in mind that the 1972–73 Budget has been formulated.

THE 1972–73 BUDGET

This has been a difficult Budget to prepare. There are several reasons for this. Firstly the depressed state of prices for many of our agricultural exports means that there will not be as much money around in the country as could be hoped … Secondly planning of the Budget was more difficult than usual because it was not until 19 July that we knew the amount of assistance we would receive from the Australian Government. As a result my department had to prepare several tentative Budgets based on different levels of Australian aid. This caused considerable additional work, not only in the Treasury, but also in almost every department of the government. It is a matter of regret to me that the Australian Government has not so far agreed to a level of assistance for a number of years ahead. This would make planning very much easier and more meaningful and would eliminate much unproductive work. The Government will continue to press the Australian Government to agree to a rolling program of aid.

> “… here you have a man, elected by the people, controlling the purse strings of the country, and this is when you really start to govern …

Finally the need to find over $2 million to meet the cost to the Government of the interim award for local officers’ salaries has resulted in that much less being available for works and services. It is a fact of life to

which many people are blind that the Government does not simply turn on a tap and money flows out. The Government gets its money by taxing the people, by raising loans and from aid from Australia. Therefore each extra demand which the Government has to meet means that there is that much less money available for other things. This is what has happened because we have had to find over $2 million more for salaries – we have had to cut back elsewhere.

On the second reading of the Bill, the Deputy Australian Administrator, Mr Newman, recognised the significance of the day.

22 Sept 1972, p. 774

Mr Speaker. Sir, the introduction of the 1972–73 Budget by the Honourable Minister for Internal Finance was an historic and exciting event, historic because it marked the end of the officials' era. It was exciting because here you have a man, elected by the people, controlling the purse strings of the country, and this is when you really start to govern. … Sir, in the post-war period the total of Australian aid to this country was $1,332 million. That is a tremendous sum. I do not say this to you on the basis that I expect you to fall down and thank Australia. I only want you to realise the task ahead of us.

Many members were disappointed that their electorates received either no funding or very little. They were aware that constituents expected their representatives to secure government spending for much-needed schools, hospitals and roads.

22 September 1972, p. 757

Mr Traimya Kambipi (Kompiam–Baiyer)

Thank you, Mr Speaker. I have very little to say on this Budget as it seems to me that the 1972–73 Budget is an experimental one, rather like a new toy that children play with. My electorate is not going to benefit from this Budget. In the last two financial years – that is 1970–71 and 1971–72 – consideration was not given to my electorate. This is very bad. Can this new Government consider assisting my electorate? It does not matter if we are not

going to be given the same amount of money as Hoskins, but at least something should be given to us … The budget is not a very good one.

Others used the budget debates to argue for spending on the social problems facing the nation.

27 September 1972, pp. 906–7

Mr Anton Parao (Western Highlands)

Mr Speaker, there is a disease which has spread throughout Papua New Guinea and it seems incurable. Now this disease is the disease of unemployment of both young Papua New Guineans with education and without education. Mr Speaker, with regard to the educated Papua New Guineans there was and still is no combined effort of the Department of Education and the Department of … Labour to plan and have jobs available for school leavers each year. This would avoid the problem of young people running around trying to find jobs after they finish school. As a trained teacher myself, I do not like to see young well-educated people unemployed. The country is spending so much money on educating Papua New Guineans so that they would, or most of the educated people would, get reasonable jobs in this country. The Department of Education and the Department of Labour should try to set up suitable bureaux to provide equitable jobs for everyone leaving school.

> “
> … I have very little to say on this Budget as it seems to me that the 1972–73 Budget is an experimental one, rather like a new toy that children play with … The budget is not a very good one.

Mr John Kaputin (Rabaul) rejected the budget, claiming it would do little to advance Papua New Guineans.

22 September 1972, p. 767–70

Mr John Kaputin (Rabaul)

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. … I believe that for over a quarter of a century since World War II the people of this country have been working and waiting for the creation of a government that would some day give direction and hope to its people. Our hope has been that some day this government would be formed in order to grant and administer justice, equality, freedom and economic progress in our society.

… I believe we have sold our souls down the drain to the pockets of foreign investors. Thus we deny our people the right to exploit their own resources, whether they care to utilise them now or in the future. By giving first preference to foreign capital and expatriates, we are, in fact, saying that our people are not fit or good enough to run their own affairs and we therefore place ourselves in a position where we now condemn our own people to a position of permanent dependency and those of us who glorify ourselves to be legislators to be nothing more than 'bootlickers' and 'suckers'.

… Mr Deputy Speaker, let it be understood that our Tolai history is not the experience of other parts of the country … Therefore, if we have been kicked around a little, perhaps we can share our experience with fellow members in order to work for something different and better. … this Budget gives priority to the foreigners, and I suppose there is nothing Papuans and New Guineans can do until this House is cleaned out of plantation cobwebs which continue to pollute the politics of this country.

… I would have thought that one form of incentive would be to give our own companies – that is companies started by Papuans and New Guineans – a reduced rate of company tax for a specified number of years. … Today we do not provide for this. We demand that both a foreign established company and a newly formed black company must pay the same company tax. Mr Deputy Speaker, may I ask if there is any

“
… this Budget gives priority to the foreigners, and I suppose there is nothing Papuans and New Guineans can do until this House is cleaned out of plantation cobwebs which continue to pollute the politics of this country. …

moral justification for making a child and an adult carry the same weight when we know that that child has not the strength of his counterpart? … in this country we even go to the extent of allowing tax holidays to such giants as CRA in Bougainville and Harrison and Crossfield in West New Britain.

Mr Deputy Speaker, how in the name of justice can we possibly expect our people to get anywhere when we allow this sort of practice to exist in this country?

28 September 1972, p. 936

Mr Julius Chan

Your debates have been very important. They have contributed much and I consider them to be very important. I have stressed the word 'important'. This is because I believe it is an appropriate word to be using here. You are important people. Therefore your ideas are very important. Economic planning is an important activity, and this is an important time for Papua New Guinea. It is important because the Government looks to you as advisers, educators and planners to generate a sense of responsibility among our people and unite and contribute a greater share in the running of your country. Only when we are conscious of a common purpose – to build a strong, stable and viable country – can we feel proud in the sacrifice demanded of us for this fulfilment. I would ask everyone here to begin a new and rejuvenated effort to bring Papua New Guinea closer to our hearts. We realise that as we solve one problem a new one emerges, but we must have the patience, the guts and the gumption to face the problems. Each of you will have a part to play in this changing future. Question resolved in the affirmative.

1.7 'Lucky'

Over a number of sitting days in September, members debated the 1965 ordinance against playing cards. Mr Galopo Masa (Kandrian–Gloucester) moved to repeal the law, arguing that card playing could not be stopped. A number of members agreed the law could not be enforced, for even the policemen were playing cards, but Mr Sinake Giregire (Daulo) insisted the ordinance should remain on the books.

21 September 1972, p. 722

Mr Speaker, I was responsible for the introduction of what is now the law against card playing. I have always been aware that card playing includes a number of harmless games, but the fact that cards are used in gambling, which causes social disorder in our community, made me, at the time I introduced the legislation, see it as necessary to ban cards.

21 September 1972, p. 725

Mr Damien Kereku (East New Britain) opposed the repeal of the Bill.

Firstly money is just being wasted in playing cards. Secondly it weakens the character of a man. Thirdly it weakens a man's physical strength. He does nothing else from sunrise till sunset but sits there playing cards. He therefore ages prematurely. I am not speaking in favour of any side: I am only airing some of the facts that I see.

Mr Michael Pondros (Manus) drew attention to the game 'Lucky', which was played extensively in the New Guinea Islands.

21 September 1972, p. 732

... Mr Speaker, who discovered this country and taught us to play 'lucky'? Our ancestors did not play cards. Who taught them? Australia took over this country in 1918 and its people taught us to play 'lucky' until it became firmly established; and we cannot stop it now. Even if we try to prevent 'lucky' by severe penalties people will play it secretly and will continue to play until the end of time. As Mr Michael Somare said, we must find a way to control cards, but cards are a part of our life; just like sago which is a staple diet. Let us compare the amount of trouble which results from drink and from cards. Drink causes the most trouble, killings, murders, etc. I think 'lucky' does not compare with drink.

"
... Mr Speaker, who discovered this country and taught us to play 'lucky'? Our ancestors did not play cards. Who taught them? Australia took over this country in 1918 and its people taught us to play 'lucky' ...

1.8 Translation

Language was a significant barrier to members who did not speak English, Motu or Pidgin. The simultaneous translation service translated into Pidgin, which many understood, but for those who spoke only one language, or whose regional tongue was Motu, a further translator was provided who could translate from Pidgin into the language of the member. For many, the problems of language were not overcome by the translation service. And in the case of Mr Kui Baiyang (Middle Ramu), the problems of language were made worse by his small stature.

22 September 1972, p. 756

Mr Kui Baiyang (Middle Ramu)

I think I am unfortunate being a short person as the tall members who rise in front of me get the call. Each time I rise I have to resume my seat. I would stand on my desk but that would be too disturbing. I have not been quite at ease during the past two weeks hearing the views of various members. In fact I am confused – very confused. I am not literate so I cannot read to gain information. Also, I can only speak and understand Pidgin. Mr Speaker, I am most disappointed that I should have stayed here for a couple of weeks without saying a word and will have to return to my electorate and my people.

> “I think I am unfortunate being a short person as the tall members who rise in front of me get the call … I would stand on my desk but that would be too disturbing …

Problems with translation could silence even important men with significant influence in their district. In the previous House the member for Koroba–Kopiago Mr Andagari Wabiria was a translator for Mr Handabe Tiaba, known for his role in the pacification of his area and a strong supporter of the government. But Mr Tiaba understood little in the House as he suffered through the two-step process of translation first into Pidgin then into Huli. Mr Wabiria recalled that time with regret and sought to carry Mr Tiaba’s vision into the Third House.

Translators seated behind glass above the floor of the Second House of Assembly
Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales and Courtesy Tourism Australia File 01 *Walkabout* magazine, Papua New Guinea, 66

22 September 1972, p. 776

Mr Andagari Wabiria (Koroba–Kopiago)

A former Member named Handabe Tiaba worked very hard to develop our Southern Highlands District; ... my friend Handabe Tiaba sat in this house and I sat in the interpreters booths and interpreted for him. I think I confused some members with my incorrect interpretations. Other members did not take any notice of him. But when Mr Newman introduced his budget, Mr Tiaba stood and spoke in his own language. He said: 'I want the road to Tari' but members did not understand them; they listened to the interpretation through earphones.

2.

Towards self-government

“

… we must remember the people in the villages and encourage projects which will help all the people of Papua New Guinea. The village people would not be pleased if we confined ourselves to big business. We must think of the people in the villages …

2. The lead-up to self-government

The lead-up to self-government in Papua New Guinea in 1973 was marked by intense debate and negotiation, reflecting the complexities of transitioning from colonial rule to national independence. The discussions in the House of Assembly revealed deep concerns about governance, law and order, economic development, and national unity, highlighting both the opportunities and challenges facing the soon-to-be independent nation.

One of the most pressing issues was law and order, particularly in the Highlands, where land disputes and tribal fighting persisted. Members of the House of Assembly, such as Chief Minister Mr Michael Somare (East Sepik) and Mr Yano Belo (Kagua–Erave), debated the effectiveness of existing legal frameworks, with some advocating for harsher penalties and even a return to traditional forms of justice, including payback killings. Others, like Minister for the Interior Mr John Guise (Alotau) and Minister for Justice, Mr John Kaputin (Rabaul) supported the introduction of village courts to empower local leaders in dispute resolution. The ongoing tensions between customary law and introduced legal systems underscored broader concerns about the country's ability to maintain stability after independence.

Economic development was another major area of debate, with Mr Somare's Eight-Point Plan emphasising self-reliance, decentralisation, and equitable wealth distribution. While many supported this vision, some, such as Mr Anton Parao (Western Highlands), critiqued the slow pace of change and the financial burdens placed on local communities. Concerns about foreign investment were regularly raised, with fears that profits were benefitting foreign entities and local elites rather than grassroots communities. The reliance on international loans for infrastructure projects further fuelled anxieties about economic sovereignty and long-term financial sustainability.

Local government and decentralisation emerged as crucial topics, particularly considering failures such as the collapse of the Gazelle Council. Some members argued for greater government support to

Minister for Territories Bill Morrison, Chief Minister Michael Somare and Prime Minister Gough Whitlam face the press, 1973.
NAA: 11887027

ensure councils could function effectively, while others pointed to the need for more flexible legislative frameworks to accommodate local conditions. Revenue collection was a recurring issue, as perceived heavy taxation on rural populations led to widespread resistance and migration to urban areas, further straining government resources.

The question of national unity and identity was particularly contentious, especially regarding Papua's separate status and the calls for secession led by Miss Josephine Abaijah (Central) and the Papua Besena Movement. Miss Abaijah and her supporters argued that Papua had distinct historical and administrative ties to Australia and should not be forced into a political union with New Guinea. In contrast, leaders like Mr John Fifita (Kula) and Minister for Information Mr Paulus Arek (Ijivitari) dismissed secessionist rhetoric as a tactic to demand greater development, emphasising the need for a unified national identity. The tensions between regionalism and nationalism were further complicated by concerns that delays in independence could encourage other secessionist movements, such as those in Bougainville.

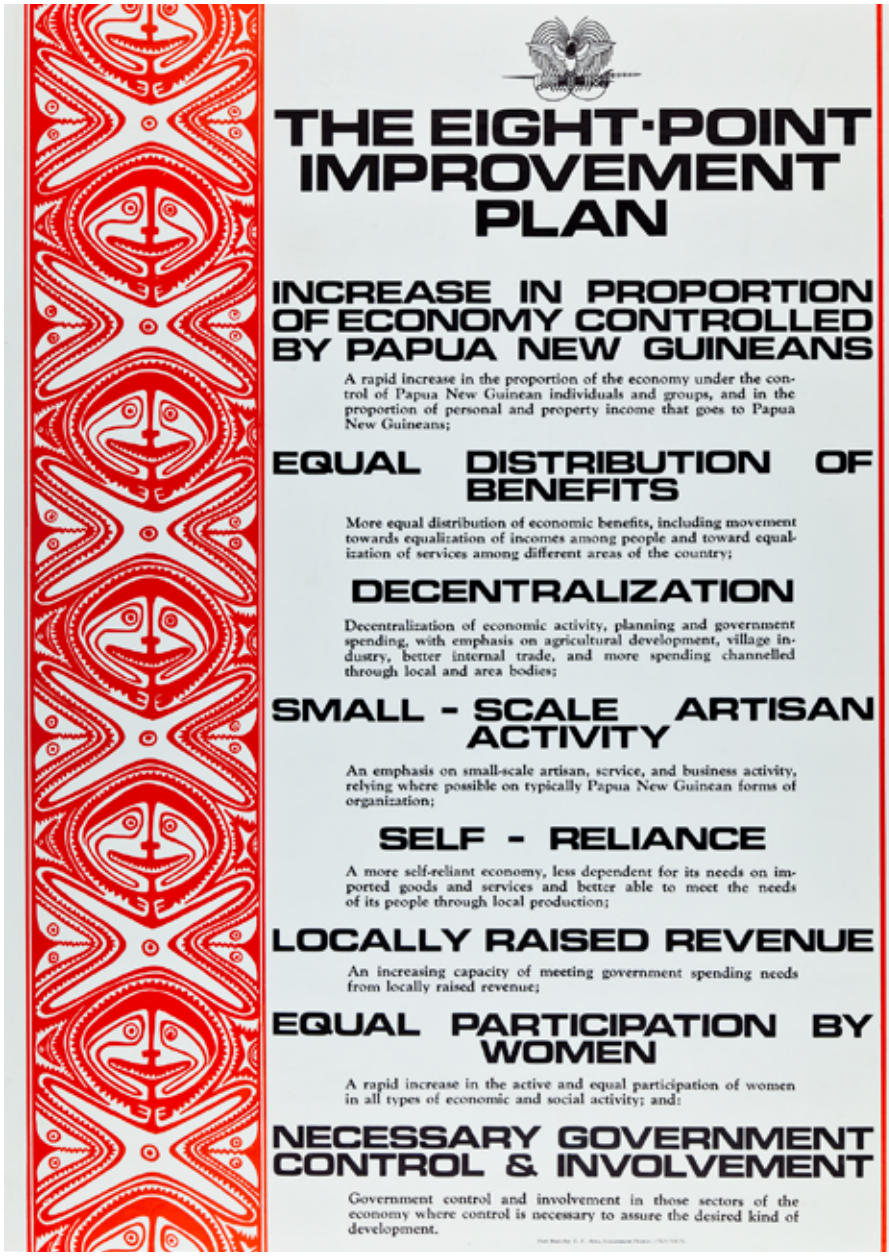
Debates over the timing of independence reflected the broader uncertainty within the House of Assembly. Some members, such as Mr Matiabe Yuwi (Tari–Komo), called for a national referendum to determine the preferred timeline, arguing that the people had not been

adequately consulted. Others, like Mr Pita Lus (Maprik), warned that prolonged delays could lead to fragmentation and instability. The lack of widespread understanding of what independence entailed highlighted the need for more public education on governance and self-rule.

Localisation of the workforce was another significant issue, with discussions focusing on balancing the need for Papua New Guinean leadership with the retention of expatriate advisers. While figures like Fr John Momis (Bougainville) criticised continued reliance on Australian administrators as a form of 'colonial infection', others, including Leader of the Opposition, Mr Tei Abal (Wabag), stressed the importance of retaining experienced expatriates to ensure institutional continuity. This debate reflected broader anxieties about the capacity of the local workforce to manage complex governmental and economic structures.

Education and infrastructure were also key concerns, particularly the need for expanded access to secondary education and improved transport networks. Some members criticised the slow progress in building high schools and questioned the fairness of taxation policies

Chief Minister Michael Somare, 1973
NAA: 11888274


THE EIGHT-POINT IMPROVEMENT PLAN
INCREASE IN PROPORTION OF ECONOMY CONTROLLED BY PAPUA NEW GUINEANS
A rapid increase in the proportion of the economy under the control of Papua New Guinean individuals and groups, and in the proportion of personal and property income that goes to Papua New Guineans;
EQUAL DISTRIBUTION OF BENEFITS
More equal distribution of economic benefits, including movement towards equalization of incomes among people and toward equalization of services among different areas of the country;
DECENTRALIZATION
Decentralization of economic activity, planning and government spending, with emphasis on agricultural development, village industry, better internal trade, and more spending channelled through local and area bodies;
SMALL - SCALE ARTISAN ACTIVITY
An emphasis on small-scale artisan, service, and business activity, relying where possible on typically Papua New Guinean forms of organization;
SELF - RELIANCE
A more self-reliant economy, less dependent for its needs on imported goods and services and better able to meet the needs of its people through local production;
LOCALLY RAISED REVENUE
An increasing capacity of meeting government spending needs from locally raised revenue;
EQUAL PARTICIPATION BY WOMEN
A rapid increase in the active and equal participation of women in all types of economic and social activity; and:
NECESSARY GOVERNMENT CONTROL & INVOLVEMENT
Government control and involvement in those sectors of the economy where control is necessary to assure the desired kind of development.

Papua New Guinea Government poster

Bill and Jan Gammage collection of Papua New Guinea Posters, Pacific Manuscripts Bureau, Photo 47-16

that disproportionately burdened rural communities. The heavy reliance on local councils for road construction and maintenance underscored the challenges of funding critical infrastructure projects in the absence of a strong national revenue base.

Overall, the lead-up to self-government in Papua New Guinea was characterised by a mix of optimism, anxiety, and political manoeuvring. While there was broad consensus on the need for independence, the debates within the House of Assembly revealed deep divisions over how best to achieve it. Issues of governance, economic control, national unity, and workforce localisation remained unresolved, foreshadowing the challenges that would continue to shape Papua New Guinea's post-independence trajectory. The discussions in 1973 laid the groundwork for the country's future, highlighting both the aspirations and the struggles of a nation on the brink of self-rule.

2.1 Eight-Point Plan: principles, choices and priorities

In June 1972, Chief Minister Mr Michael Somare (East Sepik) outlined his government's Development Programme. This broad sweeping statement was the first version of what became the Eight-Point Plan, the economic and development strategy for the nation designed to maintain the distinctive character of Papua New Guinea.

20 June 1972, pp. 244–5

... Mr Speaker, it is also clear that development can be achieved and the standard of living of the people improved only if large investments are obtained from overseas and are put to work for the benefit of the country. We therefore have to ensure that investors are fairly treated otherwise they may not be prepared to make the investments that the country needs, but we must also make sure that the national interest is safeguarded and that Papuans and New Guineans receive their fair share of the benefits of investment. The ways and means of achieving these objects

> "... we must ask ourselves what the needs and wishes of the people are and we must build our programmes accordingly.

require full discussion and full advantage.

Sir, throughout our planning for development we must ask ourselves what the needs and wishes of the people are and we must build our programmes accordingly. Only in this way can the maximum effort of the people be obtained. People throughout the country, in towns and villages, have to feel that they are working to achieve something valuable for their country and themselves and they must be able to see the results of their work. We must ask ourselves how best this can be achieved. In particular, we have to work out how best to develop and improve conditions in the rural villages of the country. A co-ordinated effort on this will be required.

The Development Programme debate continued in August. Deputy Opposition Leader, Mr Tei Abal (Wabag), agreed with Somare on the importance of the village but reminded him of the issues faced by businesses.

28 August 1972, p. 414

... However, we must remember the people in the villages and encourage projects which will help all the people of Papua New Guinea. The village people would not be pleased if we confined ourselves to big business. We must think of the people in the villages. We must do something to remedy the difficulties encountered in the coffee, tea and pyrethrum industries. We must assist those who fish, plant rice, etc. Such primary industries assist all the people.

Mr Matiabe Yuwi (Tari–Komo) was concerned that economic development would concentrate on large mining projects such as the copper mine in Bougainville at the expense of village projects.

28 August 1972, p. 415

... As Mr Tei Abal said, there is another side to the question. The Government must pay careful attention to economic development in which the small man may participate. All the people of our country cannot work in a few big projects such as that at Bougainville. Many of our children are at high school and university, various colleges and primary 'T' schools. A number of

them do not complete the courses and just wander around criticising us members and councillors. I believe these people will cause further trouble and ruin our country. Consequently to keep these people employed we must consider both large and small projects. We must think of both and not forget small projects. We should not neglect the small projects and concentrate on the big ones. If we do, the subject of small projects will blow up in our faces.

> “
> … [We] should find out how the 2.5 million people in this country could participate in the development of their country … the white man in our country is running the main industries that we have.

Mr Pena Ou (Hagen) expressed his fears that development was in the hands of too few, that there was too much reliance on the Australians and a few businessmen.

28 August 1972, p. 418

… [We] should find out how the 2.5 million people in this country could participate in the development of their country. This is the only way we can establish our economy. We all accept that a country cannot survive without a viable economy. As I said earlier, the white man in our country is running the main industries that we have. By saying this I do not deny the fact that there are local businessmen playing a part in this too … Most of the money from the Australian grant goes to the Public Service, and the expatriate public servants here contribute a lot through income tax to our revenue. I have heard so much about economic development since the Second House and so much about the failures of cash crops such as the rice mentioned by the Member for Maprik. Who is going to work on all these things? How is self-government going to function without economic development.

Mr Dennis Young (Milne Bay) moved an amendment to the Chief Minister’s June Development Programme motion which was accepted by the House.

The amendment outlined a clear list of development priorities which appear to have strongly influenced the eventual Eight-Point Plan.

4 September 1972, p. 551

... That the following words be added to the motion: 'and recommends to the Office of Planning and Co-ordination

> "... To build a nation every citizen must be prepared to make some sacrifices.

to ensure that the next development plan is constructed in such a way that the following points of policy will be achieved: (1) Economic development will be kept in line with current social and political changes, always bearing in mind the vital need for greater immediate participation in and the eventual control of the economy by the people of Papua New Guinea. (2) Prime consideration must be given to the need to raise quickly the living standards of village people in the face of the problems affecting our rural industries. (3) Planning for rural, social and agricultural development must draw heavily upon examples and experience in those parts of Asia in which the normal way of life far more closely resembles the normal way of life in our villages than does the Australian way of life and which therefore provides us with experience relevant to our needs. (4) External inflationary influences should be reduced by fostering greater self-sufficiency through replacement of imports by Papua New Guinea products. ...

In September 1972, Mr Somare spoke of the importance of self-sufficiency and the dangers of a black elite.

26 September 1972, p. 870

... To build a nation every citizen must be prepared to make some sacrifices. However there should also be benefits, because instead of spending money on public servants and their housing, we should have more money for rural development. We should also be moving closer to self-sufficiency. ... Mr Speaker, I conclude by saying that economic development under my Government will be directed at a more equal sharing of

wealth between expatriate and national, between rich Papua New Guinea and poor Papua New Guinea, and between districts. I do not want to see a very rich black elite emerge here at the expense of village people. I do not want government activity to be directed at satisfying the demands of a black elite. My Government will always regard ordinary people as being the most important people in the country – the people we will continue to work to serve.

Economic development was a high priority issue for the House of Assembly in February and March 1973 (pp. 1410–11;1491–1507; 1724–1733). There was extended debate during this period, which resulted in the formal adoption of the Eight-Point Plan.

In March 1973, Mr Somare spoke to the House about the desire to balance the traditional way of life with modernity. He speech indicates that he was refining his concept of development along the lines suggested by Fr John Momis and promoted by ideas of community development.

2 March 1973, p. 1492

... As we prepare our economic plans, Papua New Guinea is entering a period of rapid economic change and great challenge. The plans we are making now will affect our lives for years to come. We are living in a period of excitement. But we are also living in a period of bright promise. We are making plans that will preserve the best of our traditional way of life, plans that will draw on the lessons of past development, and plans that will produce the kind of society we want. I would like to discuss these plans with the House. They are plans that require courage and dedication. And there will be problems along the way as we work to carry them out. But they are plans that Papua New Guinea's people can have confidence in. We all have the same hopes for our country.

“I do not want to see a very rich black elite emerge here at the expense of village people ... My Government will always regard ordinary people as being the most important people in the country ...

First, we want to improve the lives of the people of Papua New Guinea. Improving the lives of the people means many small but important changes. It means that, when people work hard to grow crops, they can expect to have enough food to feed their families. It means that, when a child is sick, there is an aid post close by where the child can be treated. It means that a woman can draw water from a village water supply and not have to walk miles to the river. It means that villagers as well as townspeople can enjoy community centres and entertainment. And it means, most of all, that every man and woman in Papua New Guinea is able to live with dignity, following a way of life that is not imposed upon us from outside, but a way of life developed from our own traditions.

> “… we want to stand up on our own feet, to be self-reliant. Of course we will accept help from richer nations. We would be foolish not to accept help, and Papua New Guineans are not foolish.

Second, we want to stand up on our own feet, to be self-reliant. Of course we will accept help from richer nations. We would be foolish not to accept help, and Papua New Guineans are not foolish. But we will not be put in a position where we are so dependent on any other country – or on any single business or industry – that we must shape our policies with the interests of that country or industry in mind instead of our national interest. In this complex modern world no nation can be completely independent. But, as far as possible, we want to stand up on our own.

Third we want to be able to choose our nation’s future for ourselves. There are many good things in the advanced economies of Australia, Japan, and other countries. But this does not mean that we should try to imitate every feature of these countries here in Papua New Guinea. There are also many aspects of our traditional culture that we should like to keep, but this does not mean that we should reject all ideas from outside. We need to be free to choose. And to win this freedom, we must have a strong economy.

During this speech Mr Somare outlined the economic development strategy that came to be known as the 'Eight-Point Plan'.

2 March 1973, pp. 1491–2

... this House endorses the following aims as the basis for economic planning in the coming years:

(a) a rapid increase in the proportion of the economy under the control of Papua New Guinean individuals and groups and in the proportion of personal and property income that goes to Papua New Guineans; (b) more equal distribution of economic benefits, including movement towards equalisation of incomes among people and towards equalisation of services among different areas of the country; (c) decentralisation of economic activity planning and government spending, with emphasis on agricultural development, village industry, better internal trade and more spending channelled to local and area bodies; (d) an emphasis on small-scale artisan, service and business activity, relying where possible on typically Papua New Guinean forms of activity; (e) a more self-reliant economy, less dependent for its needs on imported goods and services and better able to meet the needs of its people through local production; (f) an increasing capacity for meeting government spending needs from locally raised revenue; (g) a rapid increase in the equal and active participation of women in all forms of economic and social activity; and (h) government control and involvement in those sectors of the economy where control is necessary to achieve the desired kind of development.

House members were broadly supportive of Mr Somare's Eight-Point Plan. Mr Stanton Slaughter (Kairuku–Hiri) welcomed ...

12 March 1973, p. 1724

... the Chief Minister's eight-point plan. On the surface it looks good and it is a starting point. It is hard to set the whole of a nation's future economic programme in eight short clauses but it is pretty obvious

"
... this House endorses ... a rapid increase in the equal and active participation of women in all forms of economic and social activity ...

that the plan has been developed from the two Papers. The implementation of the plan is solely dependent, in my opinion, on two factors, which are money and public servants who know well the people of the rural areas.

Mr Young (Milne Bay) believed the plan was influenced by scholars and he expressed concern about implementation …

12 March 1973, p. 1727

… obviously it has been drawn up by academics and my main criticism is that it seems to imagine that the motivations for the people of Papua New Guinea can be considered solely in terms of monetary gains. … The eight points presented by the Chief Minister are very good. My only concern now, having got the Chief Minister to make this statement, is: how are we going to go about implementing them?

Mr Anton Parao (Western Highlands) warned that while life under colonialism was relatively easy, under self-government it would become increasingly difficult.

12 March 1973, pp. 1730–1

Mr Speaker, Australia's easy-going colonial control of our country is coming to an end. The word 'colonial' has become a dirty word in some parts of the world where the governing power imposed its ideas regardless of the feelings of the people; there were shootings and gaolings of people who rebelled. In Papua New Guinea, despite the academics who have tried to tell you otherwise, the Australian colonial control was not hard to bear. … Based on recommendations from consultants, the Coalition Government has started announcing decisions which almost certainly will mean (1) More locals in Papua New Guinea will have to pay more taxes, including some tax on crops they are growing. (2) Local people earning higher salaries will have to pay more tax to help native people on lower salaries. (3) Local people will have to pay more to get help from doctors, hospitals and aid posts. (4) Local people will have to pay more to send their children to school. …

Mr Mackenzie Daugi (Northern) was disturbed by the 'equalisation of incomes' recommendation in the Eight-Point Plan. He accused the Chief Minister of seeking to turn the traditional village communal lifestyle into a form of Communism and was suspicious of Somare's adviser Tony Voutas.

12 March 1973, pp. 1733–4

... Equalisation perhaps means that whatever we do we will get the same amount of income and people must not get higher than others. I think there is an underlying Communist feeling in this paragraph, Sir. This Parliament and these lenders here, leaders of tomorrow, must be prepared to teach the Papua New Guineans to be proud of what they put into their work and to be proud of their products. This can be achieved in many ways. The man who is prepared to go where there is black or white men and prepared to work hard must be very proud of what he produces. At the same time his production is helping develop the country.

But to equalise income is a socialist and Communist attitude. The Chief Minister has Tony Voutas as his adviser. I wonder how many Tony Voutases he has in his office? I am always suspicious of the young men with beards and the young ladies who come to the Chief Minister's office to put on paper leftwing, Communist feelings. Equalisation of earnings

"... I am always suspicious of the young men with beards and the young ladies who come to the Chief Minister's office to put on paper leftwing, Communist feelings.

is a Communist attitude. I hope all the honourable members in this Chamber realise that we Papua New Guineans are very proud to live as a community. But this gives the Chief Minister and his advisers an advantage, an edge in very cleverly bringing in Communist ideas into this country.

Discussion on the Eight-Point Plan continued throughout 1973. Individual members noted specific recommendations and the potential benefits or repercussions of the plan. For instance, Mr Naipuri Maina (Western), recognised the benefit of focusing on village industry.

3 September 1973, p. 2446

... it considered the needs of village people; it wished to encourage village industry. It wanted some industry which would provide the villagers with employment and cash income. Communications are a big problem in Papua New Guinea today. If we set up all the industries in large towns such as Lae, Madang and Port Moresby, how can village people transport their produce to the big towns? Because of this I believe the recommendation to be a good means of improving the lot of the village people.

Mr John Guise (Alotau), Minister for the Interior, promoted the benefit for women of the 'Government's Eight-Point Improvement Plan'.

18 September 1973, p. 2572

... The underlying theme of that programme is the improvement of the quality of the lives of the people of this country, and a movement away from the concept of development for the sake of simple economic return. ... the seventh of the points in the eight-point plan deals with the subject of the increased involvement of women in the life of this country. A major part of the time of the staff of the Social Development Division – and particularly the female staff – is taken up with working with our womenfolk in the villages and urban settlements. ... These staff have upon some occasions been criticised for engaging in activities which are not relevant to the people they are working with, and for encouraging the establishment of women's clubs which collapse when they leave. This criticism – which more often than not comes from men – ignores one vital fact. This is that the essence of community development is to help people to do the things they want to do, after the people have themselves decided in the light of all relevant factors what this is. If, therefore, the men see their womenfolk working with a

"... the seventh of the points in the eight-point plan deals with the subject of the increased involvement of women in the life of this country.

community development officer on a project they disagree with or assisting a women's club to carry out its projects, they should not criticise the officer, who will almost certainly be doing what she knows the women she is working with want.

2.2 Foreign investment

Foreign investment was a frequent topic in the House. Most members were businessmen in their local communities and understood that foreign investment would enable a more rapid transition to a sustainable local economy. Yet there was also concern that it would lead to a dependence on foreign investors and limit the ability to control Papua New Guinea's economic future.

Mr John Maneke (West New Britain) suggested to the House that Papua New Guinea look to Malaysia and its economic transformation as a way forward.

12 March 1973, p. 1733

... The Chief Minister, the Minister for Finance and several of our other ministers have been to Malaysia and have seen the economic development and general transformation that is

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ANE 31ST MAY – 2ND JUNE 1971
AUSTRALIA and PAPUA NEW GUINEA
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Member of the House of Assembly Mr Paulus Arek (Ijivitari) speaking to an Australian Chamber of Commerce conference, 1971
NAA: 11861833

taking place there. The land, people and natural resources of our country and the state of our nation, are very similar to that of Malaysia about 10 years ago. Therefore I am confident that, if our Government follows the example of Malaysia in the formulation of economic policy, investment guidelines and the establishment of similar organisations and machinery to carry out these strategies, our country will also be able, in the years to come, to bring about economic development necessary to raise the standard of living for the people.

Mr Iambakey Okuk (Chimbu), the Minister for Agriculture, Stock and Fisheries, believed that borrowing funds from the World Bank would accelerate the development of the country.

12 March 1973, p. 1716

... The World Bank loans are particularly favourable from our point of view with very low interest rates and 50 years to repay the loan. We should take the opportunity to avail ourselves of this type of credit while it is available to help develop our country, Papua New Guinea.

Mr Naipuri Maina (Western) promoted local production at the expense of foreign investment, which only benefitted the 'elites' and not local communities.

3 September 1973, p. 2448

... The [Economic Development] Committee went on two trips. It went to Wabag and other parts of the Highlands and found that English potatoes, cabbages and tomatoes could be grown in the Highlands and at Wau, Bulolo and many other parts of Papua New Guinea. We do not encourage our people to produce enough. We say it will cost a lot to transport these goods by air to Port Moresby and Lae. How much does it cost to bring these products from Australia and New Zealand? The large stores in Lae such as Burns Philp and Steamships import such food from overseas. ... I have had enough of: 'We want foreign investment here'. Yes, we want it but it will only make the rich even richer. Those who get rich will get richer every day and the poor will get poorer. I think outsiders regard Papua New Guineans as a source of cheap labour. The time has come for my dear friends to change their attitudes.

Mr Julius Chan (Namatanai), the Minister for Internal Finance, spoke frequently of the importance of foreign investment. Chan acknowledged that maintaining ownership and control of companies in the hands of Papua New Guineans was a very important national aim. The government established an investment corporation to help grow local businesses.

22 November 1973, p. 3108

[The corporation is] ... engaged in primary industries covering dairying and the growing, processing and marketing of coffee, tea, poultry, pigs, beef cattle and timber; other investments were made in mining and manufacturing companies; and interests were also acquired in retailing, hotels, shipping and property. If the corporation had not made these investments the ownership and control of the companies concerned would have remained exclusively in overseas hands. It is clear that the corporation is making a worthwhile contribution to one of the national aims of this Government and is helping to increase Papua New Guinea's participation in major overseas business enterprises operating in this country.

> “
> ... I have had enough of: 'We want foreign investment here'. Yes, we want it but it will only make the rich even richer. Those who get rich will get richer every day and the poor will get poorer.

An oil palm initiative in West New Britain demonstrated Chan's willingness to use international loans to develop localised projects, reflecting a strategic mix of external aid and domestic ambition.

12 March 1973, p. 1715

I move – That this House resolves that the Administrator may borrow from the International Development Association or a similar agency, a sum of up to $6 million on the best and most favourable terms that can be obtained for the purpose of a smallholder/village oil palm development in the Biala area of West New Britain which will include the on-lending of a portion of the funds borrowed to the Papua New Guinea Development Bank.

Chan borrowed funds from the World Bank to fund the Electricity Commission and argued that it would have been very difficult for the country to finance such a large infrastructure project without such a loan.

23 November 1973, p. 3144

The loan [for the Papua New Guinea Electricity Commission] was suggested by a World Bank inspection mission and would meet costs which the commission or the Government would have otherwise had to meet from their own resources. I would personally like to commend the World Bank for suggesting that it could assist the commission to finance its normal activities and I would welcome any similar loans from international lending institutions. I am also grateful that the bank has recognised the burden which small countries engaged in large projects face when currency fluctuations cause the size of the loans to fall in terms of the country's currency.

Whereas Mr Sinake Giregire (Daulo) argued that borrowing was expensive and bureaucratic.

25 September 1973, p. 2756

Many Papua New Guinean politicians are angry and they have good cause to be. They represent the people of this country. The Secretary for Finance said the Development Bank was a new way to encourage development. Money would be provided to buy vehicles and establish stores. I am sceptical about these two enterprises for they do not return much profit. So I want to speak about cattle projects. People of Papua New Guinea have a lot of land available and they want to buy fencing wire, iron, posts and to hire labourers to fence large areas, but the Development Bank takes one year or even 18 months over the paper work. The Development Bank spends $6,000 to grant a $3,000 loan. Staff have to be flown in, accommodated in hotels and driven in motor cars to inspect the site. It is very expensive. I am very upset about the whole process, so I call on

“Many Papua New Guinean politicians are angry … The Development Bank spends $6,000 to grant a $3,000 loan …

the Papua New Guinea members for support. Some of us are disappointed about this matter. The bank is called the Papua New Guinea Development Bank and it aims to develop our country.

2.3 Local government and the head tax

Decentralisation was seen as a double-edged sword. While it promised community-led development, the lack of resources and government support for councils raised questions about its viability. In early March 1973, an amendment to the Local Government Ordinance was introduced to the House in the hope of supporting councils to operate more effectively. This was especially relevant to the troubles on the Gazelle Peninsula and the aims of the Mataungan Association, a Tolai-led movement opposing land alienation and colonial authority.

March 1973, p. 1718

Mr Oscar Tammur (Kokopo)

... I stand here to support all amendments the Government will make to the Local Government Ordinance. As I have already said, we can look at this amendment in the light of the situation in the Gazelle. This is something for the people of Papua New Guinea: if they find that one part of the Ordinance is making it a bit hard for them or their district they can ask the Government to make some amendments to it. That is why this Parliament was set up, Mr Speaker, to help our people. If they find that their ideas clash and they cannot find a solution, for example for Gazelle where they cannot come together, it should he remembered that the Government is there to help these people solve their problems. ...

The Leader of the Opposition, Mr Matthias Toliman (Gazelle), regarded the amendment as pointless if the government continued to ignore the actions of those groups who actively undermined local councils. His speech revealed his position against the Mataungan Association.

12 March 1973, p. 1717

... I say we are wasting our time in legislating for local government because no matter how we amend the Local Government Ordinance, the Government has never, and will never, back

up councils against the rebels. What is happening in Kiriwina is a Mataungan-like operation against the council. They will succeed, just as the Mataungans have succeeded because the Government is sympathetic to rebels – even destructive rebels. In the end when people realise that all they need to do to avoid their duty in improving their areas is to defy the councils, then these councils will collapse just as the Gazelle Council collapsed. Law abiding citizens with a high sense of civic duty who spend their time in such bodies for the welfare and advancement of their people are made the scapegoat for the Government's lack of guts in backing up its own lawful agencies.

On the other hand, Mr Michael Pondros (Manus) was suspicious of relying too much on local councils for economic development, arguing for a more equitable sharing of resources at a local level.

13 March 1973, p. 1793

... Now on Manus Island we are working, on the dollar-for-dollar basis, on our rural development projects with the Rural

Laki Yasa, President of Asaro Local Government Council

Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales and Courtesy Tourism Australia File 01
Walkabout magazine, Papua New Guinea, 64

Development Fund money. If our main economic source fails, we will have nothing else. The people too cannot trust the local government council any longer. The central government is giving a lot more power to the council than it had before. … I believe that, if the Government can give power to other organisations, it must give power to all other cargo cults. I would then start another group on Manus Island. That means the Government has to prepare power to give to my group. Everyone in this country must do the same thing and must not trust the local government councils. …

Many members of the House criticised the flat rate 'head taxes' which were regarded as unfair to rural low-income workers. Mr Toni Ila (Lae) argued such a tax was not only inequitable but there were many better options to raise council revenue. His statistics are based on the population of Lae.

14 March 1973, pp. 1799–1800

We believe that, if we collected head tax of $10 per man and per woman, the total revenue would be $40,000 per year. If you look at the other side of the picture, if we did away with the head tax of $10 per man and per woman, we would have much more money than $40,000. Our estimate for land rates is $95,000 per year, for amusement tax $100,000 per year, for our garbage collection – this is nightsoil and garbage – $60,000 a year. We feel that it is very unfair for the people who live in squatter areas, who work very hard from 7 o'clock to 4 o'clock, who have seven children in the family or probably more, to pay $10, whereas the manager of Burns Philp or Steamships who earns $200 a week pays $10. We think this is very very unjust. …

… You must remember, Mr Speaker, that for many years the people have been paying tax to the councils in all the districts. What have they got in return – nothing. …

> "Law abiding citizens with a high sense of civic duty … are made the scapegoat for the Government's lack of guts in backing up its own lawful agencies.

Mr Dennis Young (Milne Bay) argued the 'main weaknesses of local government at this time [were] the system of head tax'. Local opposition to councils was due to heavy taxation on grassroots subsistence farmers.

3 July 1973, p. 2191

... Mr Deputy Speaker, no one likes taxes, but we accept that they are necessary. In considering any tax we have to consider several things. Is it a fair tax? Can the people who are being taxed afford to pay? Can it be collected easily? Do the taxpayers receive benefits?

> "... They are the jungle dwellers ... You do not seem to realise that my people lead a different life altogether from those in the urban areas ...

During the recent troubles in the Trobriand Islands I spoke to villagers who said that they would not pay tax because for many years they had paid tax and they had absolutely no benefits. Mr Deputy Speaker, there is no answer to this. These people consider they have a genuine grievance, and they do have one. What is the position today, Mr Deputy Speaker? We have 50,000 people in Papua New Guinea today who are facing prosecution for not paying taxes. We have large groups of people, sometimes numbering 1,000 or more, who say: 'We will not pay council tax'. ...

Many members were concerned that the 'head tax' was forcing men away from farming to work on roads to pay their tax obligations.

15 November 1973, p. 2978

Mr Naipuri Maina (Western)

... The head tax system is not workable in some council areas since people in some areas have no means of earning an income to provide it. Some people can only afford 10 cents as their council tax. Sometimes people have to abandon their gardens to go to work on roads. By doing that they may earn some money to pay their council tax. We are not really encouraging our people to participate in business development. People are made to leave their village life to go somewhere and find jobs to earn a few cents to enable them to pay their council tax. ...

Some men left their villages to avoid paying 'head tax' which undermined the economic viability of local councils.

15 November 1973, p. 2985

Mr John Matik (Wosera–Gaui)

... Some men leave home rather than pay tax to the local government council. As a result the councils find that they do not have the revenue to improve their areas; all the men have left for the towns. The men do not pay tax to the town council and this too is the cause of a lot of trouble. ... Papua New Guinea is nearing self-government, so I think these men should return to their villages and so contribute to the nation's progress. ...

Decentralisation underscored fears of fragmentation. These concerns reflected the broader challenge of maintaining national unity while promoting regional autonomy. Mr Mackenzie Daugi (Northern) believed the dissatisfaction of villagers was due to a breakdown in communication between the central and local governments whose wishes were not being prioritised.

21 June 1973, p. 1885

... The Constitutional Planning Committee is looking into the dissatisfaction with the powers of the Government or the work of the Government, which the colonial government brought to us in this country. There is a lack of communication between the different bodies such as the central government and the local government councils. We want to create communication and ask people what sort of work they would like to do ...

Mr Traimya Kambipi (Kompiam–Baiyer) represented a diverse region which extended from nearby Mount Hagen to the Sepik plains. His electorate encountered 'all the difficulties of and differences that the people of the rural and urban areas face'. He argued the central government needed to clearly identify the needs of each individual electorate.

28 June 1973, p. 2047

... They are the jungle dwellers. Some of these people of my electorate eat sago, chew betel nuts and do many things similar to the people of the Sepik plains. Their main problem is earning

an income. How can they earn money? This part of the electorate has just come under the European patrols in the last two or three years. This is not a long time ago. You do not seem to realise that my people lead a different life altogether from those in the urban areas of Port Moresby, Lae, Rabaul and Wewak. When the Cabinet makes decisions about school or medical fees, it does not seem to consider the difficulties and differences that the people of the rural and urban areas face. … Some other people too in the other electorates are facing the same situation as well. Hence this is a great concern to many of the members. It would be better if our new Coalition Government examined carefully the problems of each area in Papua New Guinea. …

The minister in charge of local councils (Minister for State), Mr Boyamo Sali (Morobe) acknowledged the common complaint that constituents 'pay tax to the local government councils and get nothing done for them in return', but argued it was not the place of the central government to dictate how councils collect and spend local tax revenue.

28 June 1973, p. 2061

… If honourable members care to listen I will state my reasons. Local government councillors are elected by the people and not appointed by the House of Assembly. It is not right for the Government to tell the local government councils how to collect their taxes and from whom. The Government has no authority to advise the councils on how to spend their money either. The local government councils have the power to spend their money wherever they think it will benefit the people as a whole, and the Government has no say whatsoever in this. …

Finally in November a motion by Mr Dennis Young (Milne Bay) proposed the abolition of personal taxation by councils and the introduction of direct grants from the central government. Mr Naipuri Maina (Western) supported the motion, arguing the existing system was a 'colonial concept that was imposed upon us'.

15 November 1973, p. 2977

Recently substantial increases in head tax were imposed on us by the councils and the people are unable to cope with it. For this specific reason I endorse my support for the motion. In fact the motion merely requests the Government to abolish the old system. We should take a new approach and formulate a new system. We all understand that this system was only introduced into our country by the colonial Administration and this is, in fact, a colonial concept that was imposed upon us. We would rather see the welfare of our people improved. ...

The Minister for State, Mr Pita Lus (Maprik) outlined a decentralised economic development model in support of local councils.

15 November 1973, p. 2978

I will stick with my people and live with them as we have done in the past. We are not going to pay tax to help other people. We will pay our tax for our own development and not for the development of others. The tax paid by us will develop only our area. But for those who refuse to pay their tax, leave them alone. Do not bother about development for them. Let them get what they deserve. My people and I wish to continue paying our head tax to our council but we do not want to pay our tax to benefit those disobedient people.

While acknowledging there were problems with local councils, the Chief Minister, Mr Michael Somare (East Sepik), continued to support them.

23 November 1973, p. 3119

We support the principle of local government. I have had a committee look critically at local government as it is today. Twenty years ago when local government came into being it developed complications and these complications provide the reasons why we have had some places where local government is no longer accepted. ... The Government is in no way thinking of abolishing local government.

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... this system was only introduced into our country by the colonial Administration and this is, in fact, a colonial concept that was imposed upon us.

2.4 The United Nations and border agreements

The United Nations Trusteeship Council played an important role in the independence of Papua New Guinea. Those concerned that Australia was pushing too fast for independence were also worried that the United Nations was making unilateral decisions without consulting Papua New Guineans.

Mr Tei Abal (Wabag) questioned the motives of the United Nations and asked whether they had the best interests of Papua New Guineans at heart.

13 March 1973, p. 1751

... (1) Is it a fact that the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations takes care of Papua New Guinea? (2) If so, can it make any decision on when Papua New Guinea should achieve independence as a result of the wishes of the people of Papua New Guinea?

> “
> ... The United Nations is closely watching all that is going on here and is aware of the fact that the country has now reached the stage where it can govern itself.

Mr Matiabe Yuwi (Tari–Komo) believed the United Nations would lend international credibility to the independence process.

13 March 1973, p. 1758

... The United Nations is closely watching all that is going on here and is aware of the fact that the country has now reached the stage where it can govern itself. America and the other countries are aware of this country's nearness to independence. They trust that Australia is doing marvellous works to get the people and their country ready for that day. It is true that many of our own people are aware of this too but still there are many who oppose the move towards independence. ...

Mr Tei Abal (Wabag) continued his argument for consultation with the people before independence, but his tone began to shift to reveal his pride in the country, and his recognition that self-government would come.

13 March 1973, p. 1763

... This will fulfil the promise made by the Australian Government to the United Nations Trusteeship Council that Australia would bring the people of Papua New Guinea to self-determination. Whose determination does it say – the people. It has to be the people; every person in Papua New Guinea must say what he or she wants. Only when everyone expresses support of it can we then have independence. I advocate independence for our country. We are a bigger country than Fiji and Nauru and perhaps we are better off than they are. We do want to be proud of our nation and its leaders. I am sure that the leaders of this country are capable of running an independent Papua New Guinea; I do not question that. ...

Prime Minister Gough Whitlam meets the Administrator's Executive Council, 1973.
NAA: 33231404

Discussions on international relations revealed a strategic focus on projecting readiness for independence while managing regional sensitivities. The emphasis on clear borders reflected concerns about sovereignty and potential conflicts with neighbouring countries. In June 1973, the Chief Minister, Mr Michael Somare (East Sepik), moved the second reading of the Indonesian Border Agreement.

18 June 1973, p. 1831

... the border between Papua New Guinea and Indonesia was defined in agreements between the British, German and Dutch Governments last century. These provided for the land border to be along the 141st degree longitude from the north coast to the Fly River, and to follow the 'thalweg' – the middle of the main channel – of the Fly River until it picked up the longitude due north of the mouth of the Bensbach River on the south coast.

"
... the border between Papua New Guinea and Indonesia was defined in agreements between the British, German and Dutch Governments last century.

Because of the uncertainty as to where the border between Papua New Guinea and Indonesia actually lay on the ground, a series of meetings between Australian and Indonesian government officials was held between the years 1964 and 1967 to arrange for a joint survey of the Papua New Guinea/Indonesian land border. This joint survey was carried out in 1968 and 1969. It established the 141st meridian of longitude as the boundary from the north coast near Wutung to the Fly River in the south and placed ten monuments on the ground along the meridian.

The colonial agreements also failed to demarcate the seabed boundaries at the northern and southern end as these were not relevant at the time. ...

... As the next step in developing good bilateral relations with Indonesia, discussions have already been commenced at the official level on a border regime to facilitate preservation of traditional rights of people living in the region, while giving proper recognition to the international significance of the boundary. These will include recognition

of land rights and rights of social contact across the border in both directions of people who live in border areas.

In response to the Bill, Mr Pikah Kasau (Manus) gave an impassioned speech advocating for the rights of the 'West New Guineans'.

26 June 1973, pp. 2010–11

... I am one of those many people who have studied some of the movements that took place when the Indonesians took over West New Guinea. We realise that, within the last five or six years, as the Honourable Member for West Sepik has stated, there have occurred a lot of changes which are threatening the security of Papua New Guinea. I do not agree with what is now the Indonesian border. Papua New Guinea must realise that it is now playing politics. I think that when time permits we must let the people of West Irian know that they are not Indonesians. West Irian is just a territory of Indonesia. It is not right for us to talk of the Indonesian border because we Papua New Guineans should realise that we are merely selling the rights of the West New Guineans to another country. ...

The people of West New Guinea are New Guineans and, like the East New Guineans of Papua New Guinea, they belong to the Melanesian race of the Pacific. It appears to me that when we agreed to the Indonesian border agreement we were simply selling the rights of our friends to Asia. This is one of the things we have to consider very carefully for the sake of the security of Papua New Guinea. Some people stated that in 1895, when the Dutch negotiated border agreements with the British and the Germans the island of New Guinea was comprised of three colonies: West New Guinea under the Dutch; German New Guinea; and New Guinea did not have at that time two divisions of just Indonesia and Papua New Guinea.

Therefore we must give careful thought to preserving the rights of the people of

> "... Listen to the cries of the people of West New Guinea who resemble us in race and cultural habits. They are part of the people of Papua New Guinea.

West New Guinea. Right at this time as Papua New Guinea is approaching self-government and independence, one of the first things we must include in our foreign relations discussions with the other countries is the rights of the people of West New Guinea. ...

... Listen to the cries of the people of West New Guinea who resemble us in race and cultural habits. They are part of the people of Papua New Guinea. If the West Irianese were working amongst the Papua New Guineans, they could not be easily identified apart as they are all New Guineans. I do not believe in the establishment of Indonesian consulates in Papua New Guinea without giving enough time and thought to it. As we have passed the Border Agreement Bill, I suggest we forget the idea of setting up an Indonesian Consulate in Papua New Guinea. I wholly oppose the coming of the Indonesian Consulate.

By contrast, the Inland Minister for Defence and Foreign Relations, Mr Albert Maori Kiki (Moresby Inland), was diplomatic in advocating for freedom of movement in the border region and the importance of consular missions.

6 September 1973, p. 2501

... Members will appreciate that nations exchange diplomatic and consular missions in order to increase understanding of each other, to handle inter-governmental business, and to look after international interests. In the case of Indonesia there is a need for us to speak about matters concerning the border, so that people living in these areas are not unduly restricted in their activities and so that the border is not misused nor becomes a cause of discontent between the two sides. Just as important we hope that an exchange of missions will lead to educational and cultural links, and to the development of trade. We like to think that there will be opportunities for Papua New Guinea in the future to sell products in the eastern parts of Indonesia, such as Irian Jaya. ...

2.5 Law and order and tribal fighting

A resurgence in tribal fighting, following the partial withdrawal of the Australian administration in the Highlands, alarmed the House. Michael

Mr John Guise with patrol officers, 1964
NAA: 30835456

Somare proposed local tribunals and kin group liability in an attempt to balance Western and traditional practices. In September 1973 the Village Court Bill was introduced in an attempt to reinforce law and order and empower village elders in dispute resolution.

Mr Michael Somare (East Sepik) spoke in the House to answer the 'many questions asked during the meeting of the House relating to the fighting in the Highlands'. His government had established a committee to investigate the problem.

12 March 1972, p. 1709

... The committee has found that land disputes are a very common immediate cause of fights and has identified weaknesses in the present methods of handling land disputes. It recommends that local tribunals, supervised by a specially appointed officer, should be given power to decide boundary disputes and other disputes over land ownership and usage without waiting for the detailed and slow investigations presently required by the Land Titles Commission.

Another immediate cause of many fights is the killing of a kinsman. The committee makes

detailed recommendations for the introduction of legislation providing for kin group liability to pay compensation and for the right of the victim's kin group to receive compensation. …

… The committee also examined the existing law and court structure and procedural rules. It favours a moderate form of kin group responsibility, recommending changes in the legislation to enable the courts to identify the key lineage groups at the centre of the fight and providing for punishment of the group. Group punishments recommended include imprisonment of men of fighting age, ordering community work projects and group pig fines …

There were regular calls in the House for harsher punishments for crimes and for the revisiting of traditional laws. For instance, Mr Yano Belo (Kagua–Erave) argued that personal safety should be the priority of the House before discussing self-government and independence.

2 July 1973, pp. 2125–6

We are now approaching self-government and independence and we have new laws and ways to run our country. We also have new rules to deal with people who break the law. But in the old days, according to our custom in the Southern Highlands, if I took something out of my neighbour's garden, I would suffer very severe punishment. This punishment was much more severe than what some of the present local courts impose on the present lawbreakers, or people who do not obey the road laws. What I am trying to say, Mr Speaker, is that the people are not satisfied with the severity of punishment imposed on people who break the law, by the courts. We believe these people who break the law should be given longer sentences and the fines too should be increased. …

… Even if we have to bring back the law of our ancestors, where payback killing was one way of paying for crimes, we should look very carefully and seriously into our present laws.

“
… Even if we have to bring back the law of our ancestors, where payback killing was one way of paying for crimes, we should look very carefully and seriously into our present laws.

During the same debate Mr John Pokia (Okapa) did not think that gaol terms would ever be an effective punishment for murder, that it undermined law and order in the villages.

2 July 1973, p. 2130

This House as well as the councils are ashamed of the fact that Papua New Guineans kill each other. When we hear this we are ashamed of it. If this present Government wants to do away with murders, there is a way to do it, and that is to change the law. The law must be changed so that courts have the power to execute murderers. If we do this, the relatives of the people concerned will not cause any more trouble. As Mr Yano Belo has said, if he killed me, then my relatives would kill him and there would be no more trouble. There is no argument over it – it is finished for that is the traditional law of this country. If we want to adopt the existing Australian laws then we must put the murderers in gaol for about 20 to 30 years. When they have finished serving their sentences and when they go home they will have money and other things as though they had come back from a labouring contract. But the people will still think about the murdered people and bad feeling will remain towards the murderers. The people will still have bad feeling because the deceased were not paid for. Since these feelings remain with the people, many problems derive from them. So, when these feelings still exist, we must try to change the laws to accommodate life sentences. I think the Minister for the Interior

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This House as well as the councils are ashamed of the fact that Papua New Guineans kill each other.

must pay special attention to this. When prisoners serve short sentences and then go home they tell stories of how they spent their lives in prison. As a result of these stories, more trouble starts. If we want these problems to be done away with and if we want to progress peacefully, we must change these laws. For murder we should impose life imprisonment.

Mr Pena Ou (Hagen) contended that tribal fighting was caused by a breakdown in traditional customary laws, replaced with an Australian version which Ou argued was wholly unsuitable.

2 July 1973, p. 2130

... Now here is one problem. How can we change our laws to suit what is practised in our country? At the moment we are following the marriage laws which have been brought to us from Australia and from other countries; we have copied them. The time has come when we must have our own marriage laws so that people can see justice; so that when people are married and they want to be divorced, the law says how that divorce can be enacted so that there is not any ill-feeling by both parties. The main problems causing tribal fighting are land and marriage, and both result in payback killing.

Other members argued the 'wantok' system was at fault for undermining the rule of law and was a significant threat to the creation of the nation-state. For instance, Mr Belo argued as follows.

2 July 1973, p. 2126

... I think the 'wantok' system is one problem which in some ways relates to the present situation. I can even say that I have seen the 'wantok' system existing in the Parliament. The laws of this country are not secure enough to achieve self-government and independence. ...

Mr Ou thought that the 'wantok' system was the cause of fighting which resulted in undermining economic productivity.

2 July 1973, p. 2126

... I have seen in the Highlands that there are many coffee growers, trade store owners, cattle owners and many other entrepreneurs and when they fight these businesses cannot continue because the owners are put in prison. The coffee gets ripe and falls to the ground, gardens are ruined by the pigs, cattle get lost, and so on. I have seen these things happen because people do not obey the laws of the Government. But if the law was harsher to guide the people then the country would run well.

I think that if there are many troubles like this the country will not run properly. If the Papuan and the New Guinean coastals ignore the situation and let the Highlands go it alone, and say that they can form their own government when they have the experience, they should forget this style of thinking. … People are being hurt in these fights, but I do not think they are fighting because of self-government, or independence. These fights do not have any valid reason at all. They are just fighting because of the 'wantok' system. …

By November 1973, the constant debate in the House regarding tribal fighting and 'wantok' led the Minister for the Interior, Mr John Guise (Alotau), to criticise members for constantly belittling Papua New Guineans. He argued the constant reference to 'wantok', primitive customs and tribal fighting undermined national unity.

26 November 1973, p. 3185

… yet everyone who has spoken about the ways of our traditional leaders have belittled them. I am rather surprised that some of my brothers, elected members, in Committee time are raising questions. This is good, but it gives the impression that only in Papua New Guinea is there a 'wantok' system. I think the time has come for us to stop belittling our own people in our own Parliament. If you want to talk about the 'wantok' system then I draw the attention of elected members to the 'wantok system' operating in other countries, such as the United States of America. If there was no 'wantok system' in the United States of America there would not have been a Watergate Affair. I am tired of us leaders here belittling our own people, speaking of the 'wantok' system as if it were peculiar to Papua New Guinea. The 'wantok' system is all over the world. Australia, New Zealand, England, France, every one of those European countries has a 'wantok system'. Papua New Guinea is not the only one. So I think we had better stop talking about the 'wantok' system here.

> "The laws of this country are not secure enough to achieve self-government and independence. …

These very people who have elected us are the people whom we belittle, Mr Chairman. I for one am tired of it.

I submit, Mr Chairman, that before the coming of the metropolitan government to Australia our traditional leaders knew how to rule their society. This talk of a primitive society carries no weight with me. Because however primitive or unsophisticated our society is, the elders of that particular society knew how to govern their people and I think we of the younger generation today should take note of this.

In September 1973, the Minister for Justice, Mr John Kaputin (Rabaul), introduced the Village Court Bill. The Minister, while accepting there would be some practical problems to overcome, said it was important to empower elders to oversee local disputes and enforce traditional expectations.

28 September 1973, p. 2881

I move – I believe all our people have waited for this [Village Court] Bill for two years. Whatever powers were held by our leaders were stripped from them by the new system of laws. When our people saw that our leaders were powerless, a lot of problems resulted, and the leaders could do nothing. This Bill has been introduced after 20 years to restore power to our people. ...

> “This talk of a primitive society carries no weight with me. Because however primitive or unsophisticated our society is, the elders of that particular society knew how to govern their people ...

...people say that village courts should be quite independent of all other courts and should have wide powers of both a criminal and a civil nature. There are practical difficulties with both points of view. If village courts do not have effective power to deal with the disputes brought before them, they will not gain the confidence and support of the people and there will be no point in setting them up.

As set out in this Bill the proposed village courts system is a compromise between these

two points of view. It gives to village courts as much power and authority over disputes as they can effectively deal with, as can be given without causing serious conflicts with the other courts. The Bill also provides for the minimum involvement by central authority and provision for appeal and review, as is necessary in the interests of good government and the protection of the rights of our people.

The Opposition Leader, Mr Tei Abal (Wabag) summed up the hopes of the Village Courts Bill to reinforce law and order in the villages.

20 November 1973, p. 3081

In the days before the Europeans came to this country, some influential village leaders were able to settle disputes in their communities. I think it is about time we again gave these village elders power to continue this practice, but with some legal authority from the Government. They are accustomed to the traditional cultures of their people. It is unwise to delay this move because a delay could cause minor troubles to develop into very major ones. Every time such trouble arises, the police go in, make arrests and put the people in the gaol, which is not good.

We all know that in the Highlands, some people have more than one wife and very often they have domestic arguments. If such arguments arose, the village elders would be able to settle the arguments. It would be unrealistic to bring these sorts of domestic disputes to the local courts and have them resolved by a magistrate. It would be unfair for a magistrate who does not know much about the traditional cultures of the Highlands people to make decisions on cases like this. Although he is legally trained to make decisions, he would find it extremely difficult if the interpretation of traditional culture by a native of the area was not very clear to him. He would only be wasting his time. However these village courts would be able to settle domestic arguments, disputes about the ownership of certain things like gardens and pigs, or other things that women usually fight about. When women fought over these things, the elderly people in the villages would be able to settle these disputes.

2.6 Localisation of the workforce

Localisation debates revealed anxieties about national competence and the risk of inefficiency in the Public Service during the transition. The government faced a dual challenge: creating a sense of ownership among Papua New Guineans while avoiding the alienation of skilled expatriates who could contribute to stability and development.

Chief Minister Mr Michael Somare (East Sepik) emphasised the importance of experts to the running of any nation regardless of their nationality. He spoke of balancing localisation, providing opportunity for 'my own people' while retaining institutional memory for governance.

13 March 1973, p. 1780

... As the country grows, as the talent is produced in this country, this young talent has to come in. We have to rely on experts. Without experts any independent nation cannot function. Even the United States of America, which knows how to make rockets to go to the moon, relied on German experts for the rockets. Honourable Members should know that. Independent countries do hire people and bring talent into the country. Any expatriate officer in the Public Service with a special skill and experience in helping this country, we are willing to accept, and we will keep this officer in this country. ...

> "The reason why we are localising is that Papua New Guineans will eventually run this country.

... the Government's aim is to streamline the Public Service and to make it cheaper and more appropriate. The reason why we are localising is that Papua New Guineans will eventually run this country. After all, Sir, this is their country. What is the purpose of educating them at the Institute of Technology and getting them to the University in Port Moresby? What is the reason for that? Any country that is growing up has to rely on experts. We have to hire consultants; we have to get experts from overseas. We pay them to do a job for us, but at the same time we have to look to our own doorstep and give chances to our young people. I would be making a serious mistake in this country, Sir, if I deprived my own

people, if I said to my own people that they are not capable of doing the jobs that white people are doing in this country. …

By contrast, Fr John Momis (Bougainville) argued the continued employment of expatriates and the continued reliance on Australian aid were a signal to the world that Papua New Guinea was not ready for self-rule.

29 June 1973, pp. 2072–3

… We do not have to go and ask somebody else to tell us whether we are ready for home rule. When are we going to make decisions on our own? This is a very major error in this country today. Many of us members and a lot of educated people are preoccupied with these types of ideas. This sort of idea completely confuses us. This is colonial infection. Because some expatriates say we are not ready yet, we think we are not ready for self-rule. However, we would be very grateful if they said we are ready. I would like to make it quite clear that if this colonial illness is not cured now, it will never be eradicated in the future. This idea is becoming a chronic disease in this country and it will be carried on from generation to generation, if it is not eradicated now. This is a complete indication of lack of confidence. We are too timid. We are only waiting for somebody to praise us. That is why we never do anything. We will wait too long and we will never achieve our destiny. If we cannot have the courage now, we will never achieve what we want. If we cannot do anything now, when will we start thinking for ourselves? Who will take the initiative to lead our people? Australia has put in a lot of effort in developing this country. I am not complimenting those who have been educated. Those who are educated are also affected by this colonial illness. They are lacking in self-confidence. …

Mr Mackenzie Daugi (Northern) spoke of his concern that some local officers were being promoted regardless of their capacity or willingness to do the work needed in the district offices.

12 March 1973, p. 1733

… there is the pressure of localisation to consider. As many members have already said about localisation, it is very

expensive and very dangerous. … I hope the Chief Minister and his colleagues examine these people properly before promotions are made. Certainly many people throughout the country are saying: 'We are getting self-government, sure but self-government is for you, the members of the House of Assembly'. What do they mean by this? What they mean is that, when they come to the district offices, the local people in the district offices are not prepared to serve them as they were served by the colonial masters. Some of them are inefficient and this is what I mean by localisation for the sake of localisation is very expensive. …

The new Leader of the Opposition, Mr Tei Abal (Wabag), following the death of Mr Matthias Toliman on 6 September 1973, supported the retention of expatriate officers to help train local officers.

20 September 1973, pp. 2631, 2633

… These [localisation] powers will enable us to have our own local people as directors of various departments in the not too distant future. There are a lot of people in our country, both in the Highlands and coastal districts, who feel deeply and who strongly support the idea of retaining many of the expatriate officers, even after self-government and independence, so that they can work side by side with our local officers in every field of work as advisers and consultants. …

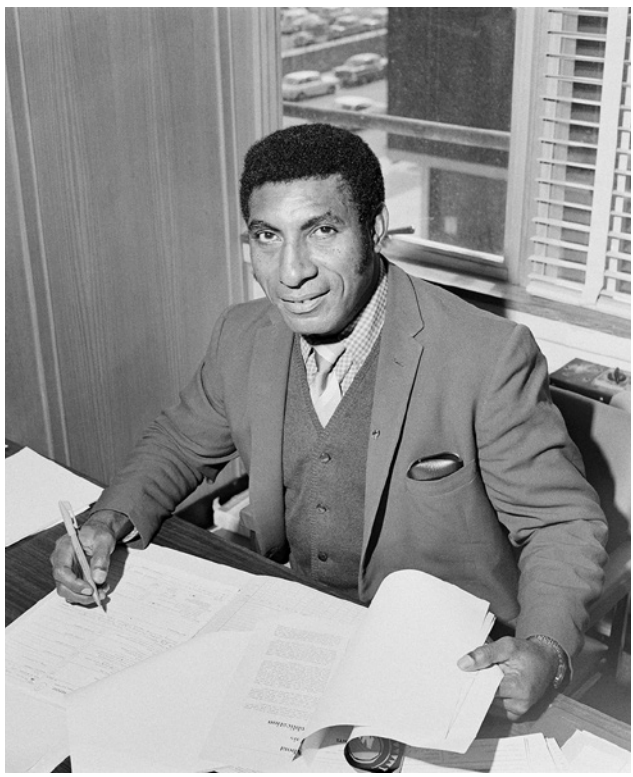
> "… we must retain our expatriate officers for a much longer time so that they can work together with our local officers until our local officers become really expert at their jobs.

… Therefore let me repeat once more that we must retain our expatriate officers for a much longer time so that they can work together with our local officers until our local officers become really expert at their jobs. Our people will see our local officers working side by side with their expatriate counterparts and will be very happy, having confidence that our own officers have acquired good knowledge about the jobs from the expatriate officers and are in a position to manage them. …

However, the retained expatriates had to be paid well. This was costly, and the price for early self-rule. In September 1973 Australian civil aviation officers went on strike which disrupted internal travel. Other expatriate officers were threatening industrial action. Minister for the Interior, Mr John Guise (Alotau), while supportive of expatriates as partners in the development of the nation, was critical and suspicious of the striking expatriates who he accused of 'opportunism'.

28 September 1973, pp. 2866–7

... there are expatriates in a position to blackmail us and they are also setting very unfortunate and selfish precedents for our local officers in the Public Service and everywhere. Mr Speaker, Rome was not built in a day and Papua New Guinea will not find solutions overnight. However, it is time now to seek ways to be more self-reliant and to be less vulnerable to the opportunism of these blackmail attempts. I would hope that our Australian brothers and sisters and other expatriates here are partners with us in building a new nation for the benefit of all our people. ...



Mr Vincent Eu, Acting Superintendent, Department of Education, 1970
NAA: 11861828

“

… The people in villages do not know at all what independence is. They are not sure if it is a cow, a dog or has a tail. The meaning still remains to be explained clearly to them …

Minister for Territories Bill Morrison, Chief Minister Michael Somare and Prime Minister Gough Whitlam at Press Conference, 1973
NAA: 11888264

2.7 Independence timing and readiness

The debate on independence, timing and readiness between the Coalition and the United Party continued into 1973 encapsulating a broader tension between nationalist aspirations and practical considerations. Advocates for immediate independence viewed it as a moral imperative and a path to dignity on the global stage. Others highlighted the risks of economic and administrative unpreparedness, which could undermine the country's stability. The United Party were especially concerned about the new Labor Government in Australia and argued for a referendum to set the date for independence.

In reaction to the statements regarding independence by newly elected Prime Minister of Australia, Gough Whitlam, Mr Matiabe Yuwi (Tari–Komo) moved a motion.

13 March 1973, pp. 1758–9

> ... taking into consideration Australia's obligations under the Nations Trusteeship Charter to bring the people of Papua New Guinea to self-determination, this House requests the Government of Papua New Guinea to hold a national referendum on a date for independence. ...
>
> ... my motion is not aimed at keeping independence from this country. I am not afraid of independence, but I will always welcome the decision of the majority of people in this country. ...

Mr Pita Lus (Maprik) highlighted the disconnection between rural villagers and the political process of independence, emphasising the need for clearer communication and local engagement. He also expressed frustration over Papua New Guinea's continued dependence on Australia, particularly in international settings, and his desire for true self-representation.

13 March 1973, p. 1761

> ... The people in villages do not know at all what independence is. They are not sure if it is a cow, a dog or has a tail. The meaning still remains to be explained clearly to them and once they understand it then the country must make a move at once to achieve it. Independence has to come. Take for example when I

was sent to represent Papua New Guinea at the United Nations with the Minister for Lands. We just sat there while the delegates from Australia did the talking on our behalf. I would not like this to continue in the near future, but this was so because Papua New Guinea is still a dependent country. I can no longer tolerate this situation because when I was there I really wanted to talk for my country. …

He opposed the motion for a referendum, fearing that delays in independence could lead to secessionist movements.

I warn this House again that we must be very careful about the use of a referendum in this country at this stage of the country's development. If independence is delayed for another 100 to 200 years then it will be very easy for the Tolais and the Bougainvilleans to secede and, no doubt, the Sepik people will also do the same. I am very serious when I say this. Therefore let us consider this call for a referendum very carefully. Let us oppose this motion.

Minister for Education, Ebia Olewale (South Fly) underscored the importance of national unity in the transition to independence. He warned against division after the progress already made and spoke of how international observers, particularly from Africa, admired the country's relatively smooth path towards self-government.

21 June 1973, p. 1898

… While the world is working towards bringing unity are we trying to – this last country in the world to achieve independence – break ourselves up after what we have built? I, for one, would not want to see that happen. I, for one, would want to see a united Papua New Guinea where every one of us will enjoy that. I might say here that my African friends have commented to me that they sometimes wonder, when they read in their newspapers or hear a broadcast, at the smoothness with which our country is developing towards achieving self-government and, finally, independence. They are awed by the fact that we have such a smooth running young country and a young government here in Papua New Guinea. This is because we leaders are united. I cannot emphasise this enough. …

In July 1973 Chief Minister Mr Michael Somare (East Sepik) issued a Joint Communique to outline the timetable for the implementation of self-government.

3 July 1973, p. 2155

December 1973 – Formal self-government will be introduced by means of amendments to the Papua New Guinea Act passed by the Australian Parliament. The Act will then reflect in law the present situation of virtual self-government.

February 1974 – The final report and draft constitution recommended by the Constitutional Planning Committee will be tabled in the Papua New Guinea House of Assembly. The constitution will provide for all major aspects of the system of government and will include provisions for the transition to independence.

April 1974 – The House of Assembly will meet in special session to consider and adopt the constitution. Following the adoption by the House of Assembly of the constitution it would be reserved for the assent of the Governor-General.

May 1974 – The Australian Parliament will consider further amendments to the Papua New Guinea Act to remove from that Act those parts which provide for the internal constitution of Papua New Guinea and which have been included in the Papua New Guinea constitution as adopted by the House of Assembly.

> “We must be very careful about the use of a referendum in this country at this stage of the country’s development …

Following the passing of the amendments to the Papua New Guinea Act, the Governor-General will be requested to assent to these amendments and to the Papua New Guinea constitution. It was agreed that this timetable would be put to the Australian Government for approval and submitted to the House of Assembly for ratification at its June meeting.

2.8 Education and infrastructure

The focus on schools and roads reflected the members' focus on infrastructure as the backbone of nation-building. Education debates revealed an ambition to create a literate, skilled populace that could drive Papua New Guinea's development. Similarly, calls for rural infrastructure development aimed to connect isolated communities, fostering a sense of inclusion and national unity.

The Minister for Education, Mr Ebia Olewale (South Fly), spoke proudly of the rapid development of Papua New Guinea's education system in the lead-up to self-government and its crucial role in nation-building. He emphasised the important role the University of Papua New Guinea played in producing capable leaders to further develop the nation.

18 September 1973, p. 2607

… Secondary education started in Papua New Guinea in 1958. In 1958 Sogeri High School was the only high school in Papua New Guinea to take in students for secondary education; I was there at Sogeri back in 1958. The university started taking students in 1966. We have many people saying now: 'What has the university given us?' The university has given us thinking people who are building up this country now. I am very proud to say that. I am very proud to say that in a relatively short time we have produced people of calibre who are now shouldering the burden of building up this country. …

> "The university has given us thinking people who are building up this country now. I am very proud to say that.

Mr Gideon Apeng (Huon Gulf) pointed out that during this period Pidgin and vernacular schools persisted despite the introduction of English schools during the 1960s. His comment reinforced the enduring role of Indigenous and Pidgin education in Papua New Guinea.

28 June 1973, p. 2060

… When the first Europeans and missionaries arrived in Papua New Guinea – I do not know about other areas, but in some parts of New Guinea – these sorts of schools were established

long before English was taught in schools. I think it was in 1960 when the English schools were established. Before that there were Pidgin and local language schools in many parts of Morobe District and the islands too, when the children were unable to go to an English teaching school because the Government and missions were unable to put up English teaching schools. This is why even today children are still going to these Pidgin and local language schools. Today the syllabus of these Pidgin schools is being translated from English to Pidgin and all the subjects are the same. ...

> “
> One of the bad things is that our schools are not teaching ethics and morals. I think this should be adopted from village level. ...

Tom Koraea (Gulf) emphasised the importance of integrating cultural education into Papua New Guinea's school system while also addressing a perceived gap in teaching ethics and morals. He argued that moral education should be rooted in village traditions and incorporated into formal schooling to strengthen societal values.

26 June 1973, p. 2019

... I would like to point out is the cultural teaching in primary and secondary schools in the Territory. I hope that the Honourable Minister for Education sits here and listens to me, whether my comments are good or bad. Mr Deputy Speaker, I am happy about the teaching of ethnic culture in the primary schools and secondary schools in our Territory. One of the bad things is that our schools are not teaching ethics and morals. I think this should be adopted from village level. ...

House of Assembly debates frequently touched on the importance of regional inequality in infrastructure development and government investment in Papua New Guinea. Members would make specific claims regarding a project from the electorate. For instance, Mr Momei Pangial (Mendi) challenged the Minister for Works to more equitably compensate his local community for road and bridge building.

12 March 1973, p. 1708

... (1) Is it a fact that the Mendi Council maintains the Mendi–Pingirip road which links Karil with Egari and goes on to Nene over the Mendi River? (2) What assistance has his department given in the building of the bridge over the Mendi River? (3) Will his department increase the weekly wage of those who help in the building of the bridge by $1 per person? (4) If not, why?

Despite being a Minister (of Mines and Energy) in the government, Paul Lapun (South Bougainville) was outspoken in his frustration at the lack of basic infrastructure for an important national project. His statement pointed to the broader issue at play, the uneven distribution of development benefits, with certain regions feeling overlooked despite their economic contribution.

21 September 1973, p. 2680

... Bougainville is one of the districts in Papua New Guinea and it provides large amounts of revenue for Papua New Guinea, not only from copper, but from cocoa, copra etc. As I have stated, huge revenues come from copper. Why is it then that the Government cannot seal the road from Kieta to Arawa? Mr Deputy Speaker, it is most unfair that the Government does not care for an area from which it obtains such large revenues. One would think we were very poor. ... Why does the Government and the company not take some action? Are they going to work out this small island? Seal the road so the Chief Minister, important people and all the rest of us can visit the mine site and walk on the road without getting our faces covered in dust. I want to have my statement incorporated in Hansard, lest people accuse me of saying nothing. I have spoken about this problem before. The road from Kieta to Arawa is for national use, like the roads in Port Moresby. They are not for the exclusive use of Papuans. The Kieta–Arawa Road is for national use for those who wish to visit the copper mine. ...

“
Seal the road so the Chief Minister, important people and all the rest of us can ... walk on the road without getting our faces covered in dust.

As Papua New Guinea moved towards independence, Minister for the Interior Mr John Guise (Alotau) addressed the shortage of housing for workers who could not afford the rent.

18 June 1973, p. 1817

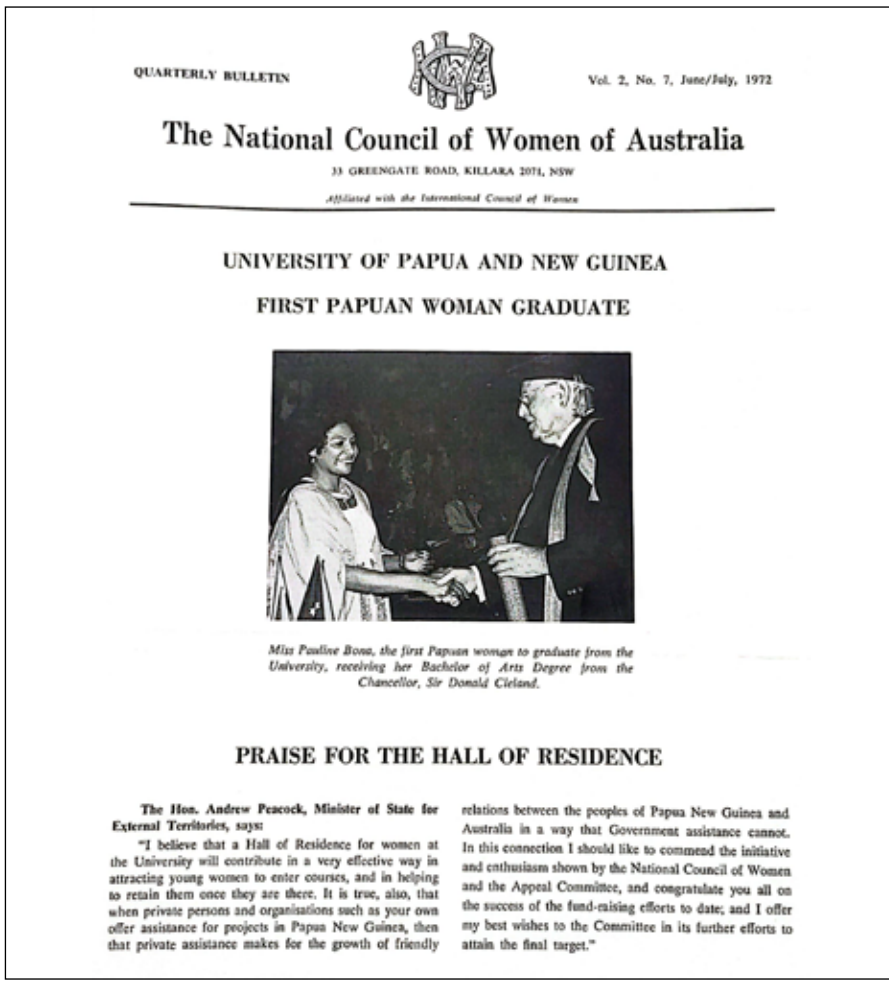
… The Government of Papua New Guinea could subsidise housing by making more grant funds available to the Housing Commission, or by reducing the interest rate on the loan funds made available to the commission, but this could only be done at the expense of other national development such as roads, bridges, schools and hospitals which are urgently required. …

… At a time of approaching self-government and independence, our country has to learn to stand on its own feet and live within the funds available. The economic answer to the problem is to provide more and cheaper housing and for more people to be prepared to construct their own housing on serviced land such as that provided by the Housing Commission, rather than seeking to provide houses at less than economic rentals. …

Nonga Hospital School of Nursing, 1974
NAA: 30905993

2.9 Citizenship and women's rights

Social equity debates in the House highlighted the challenge of balancing inclusivity with practicality. Mixed-race individuals symbolised broader questions about identity and belonging. The debate on women's rights and social inclusion in Papua New Guinea in 1973 centred on increasing women's participation in economic and political life. The government's Eight-Point Plan emphasised gender equality, and reforms were introduced, such as allowing married women to hold permanent public service positions and access superannuation benefits.



QUARTERLY BULLETIN Vol. 2, No. 7, June/July, 1972

The National Council of Women of Australia

33 GREENGATE ROAD, KILLARA 2071, NSW

Affiliated with the International Council of Women

UNIVERSITY OF PAPUA AND NEW GUINEA

FIRST PAPUAN WOMAN GRADUATE

Miss Pauline Bona, the first Papuan woman to graduate from the University, receiving her Bachelor of Arts Degree from the Chancellor, Sir Donald Cleland.

PRAISE FOR THE HALL OF RESIDENCE

The Hon. Andrew Peacock, Minister of State for External Territories, says:

"I believe that a Hall of Residence for women at the University will contribute in a very effective way in attracting young women to enter courses, and in helping to retain them once they are there. It is true, also, that when private persons and organisations such as your own offer assistance for projects in Papua New Guinea, then that private assistance makes for the growth of friendly relations between the peoples of Papua New Guinea and Australia in a way that Government assistance cannot. In this connection I should like to commend the initiative and enthusiasm shown by the National Council of Women and the Appeal Committee, and congratulate you all on the success of the fund-raising efforts to date; and I offer my best wishes to the Committee in its further efforts to attain the final target."

Miss Pauline Bona, first female graduate, University of Papua New Guinea, 1972

National Library of Australia, Records of the Australian Federation of Graduate Women, MS9529, Box 38

As Papua New Guinea approached self-government in 1973, debate emerged over the future status of mixed-race communities, with concerns about their citizenship, rights, and place in an independent nation. Mr Buaki Singeri (Kabwum) directed a question to the Chief Minister regarding the future status of mixed-race people in Papua New Guinea.

18 June 1973, p. 1821. Response from Mr Michael Somare (East Sepik).

... I cannot understand the assertion that mixed-race people will have nowhere to go after self-government. Firstly they would be welcome to become Papua New Guinean citizens and remain in this country. Secondly those who are Australian citizens and have entry rights to Australia, could choose to reside in Australia. However my Government will give careful consideration to the status of mixed-race people when the question of citizenship has been finalised. ...

> “
> ... New Guineans are Papuans and Papuans are New Guineans; there is no difference.

The Chief Minister's colleague in the Pangu Pati, Mr Tom Koraea (Gulf), affirmed the country's multicultural identity and the need for strong, principled leadership to build a stable nation.

21 June 1973, p. 1889

... New Guineans are Papuans and Papuans are New Guineans; there is no difference. This is where we stand today, as we are, as far as today's Government is concerned. ... I must emphasise that the Pangu Pati, which is the majority in the Coalition Government, knows that here in this country, we have several races living. Pangu does not upset the feelings of these races, the Chinese, the mixed race, the Europeans and so on. Pangu knows that there are 750 languages spoken by other people of this country and there are many different customs and cultures in this country. ...

The Eight-Point Plan included the directive for policy to address 'a rapid increase in the equal and active participation of women in all forms of economic and social activity'.

In September 1973, the Chief Minister, Mr Michael Somare (East Sepik), introduced reforms such as allowing married women to hold permanent public service positions and access superannuation benefits.

17 September 1973, p. 2551

... in November 1972 the House, after lengthy debate, approved that married women should be eligible for permanent appointment to the Public Service, and after further debate approved that those married women in the same or similar circumstances to those which normally apply to a husband, that is the circumstances of the 'breadwinner' or the 'head of the family', should be permitted to contribute to and receive the benefits of the Public Officers Superannuation Fund. ...

“
... the House, after lengthy debate, approved that married women should be eligible for permanent appointment to the Public Service ...

Minister for State, Pita Lus (Maprik), spoke of his support for women's political involvement and argued strongly for the recruitment of policewomen in the villages. Yet while Pangu supported the candidature of Miss Josephine Abaijah, she did not reciprocate and typically opposed the Coalition.

17 September 1973, p. 2551

... I am a Pangu man – I will not try to hide the fact – and Pangu approves of the inclusion of women in politics, etc. We supported the appointment of Miss Josephine Abaijah to Parliament because Pangu decided to put up women candidates. ... Many males in this House support this Bill; we believe there should be policewomen in our villages. There are some cases which women should investigate, because men would never settle them properly. ...

Mr John Guise (Alotau) highlighted that real progress depended on changing male attitudes, criticising resistance to women's initiatives and restrictions like banning mini-skirts. The government acknowledged the need for structural changes but stressed that true inclusion required societal acceptance.

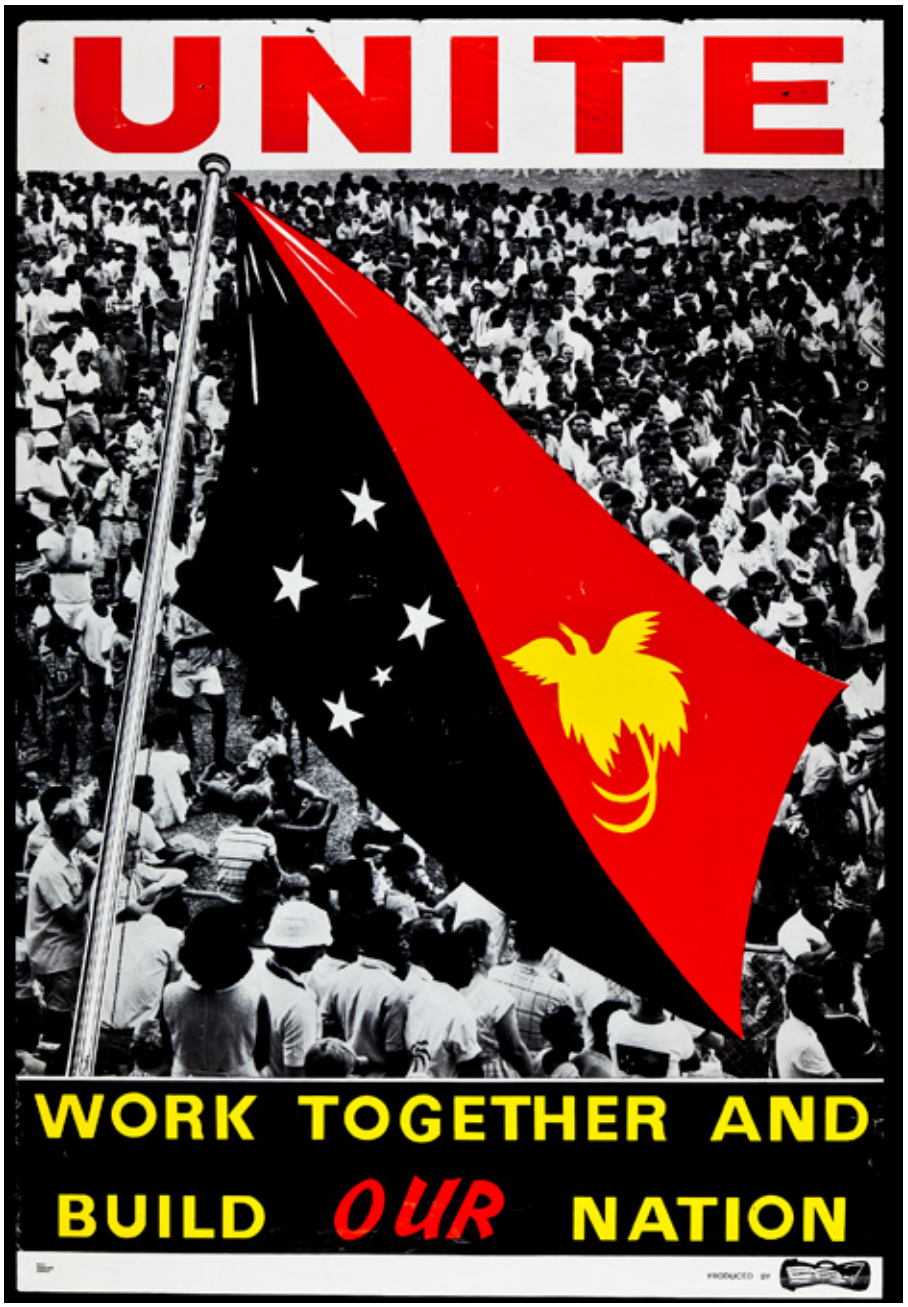
18 September 1973, pp. 2568–72

… the seventh of the points in the eight-point plan deals with the subject of the increased involvement of women in the life of this country. A major part of the time of the staff of the Social Development Division – and particularly the female staff – is taken up with working with our womenfolk in the villages and urban settlements. … These staff have upon some occasions been criticised for engaging in activities which are not relevant to the people they are working with, and for encouraging the establishment of women's clubs which collapse when they leave. This criticism – which more often than not comes from men – ignores one vital fact. This is that the essence of community development is to help people to do the things they want to do, after the people have themselves decided in the light of all relevant factors what this is. If, therefore, the men see their womenfolk working with a community development officer on a project they disagree with or assisting a women's club to carry out its projects, they should not criticise the officer, who will almost certainly be doing what she knows the women she is working with want.

The Government can and has said that it is a major part of its programme for women to take part actively and equally in the economic and social life of this country. This policy will however remain no more than a dead letter until the men of the community in which the women live agree to accepting them as active and equal participants. Criticising women by men,

> "… if the Government's programme relating to the advancement of women is to get off the ground, there must be many changes in men's attitudes towards their women. …

which includes some honourable members of this Parliament, and stopping them from doing the things they wish to do such as banning the wearing of mini-skirts are excellent means of preventing active and equal freedom which men enjoy. Might I assure honourable members that mini-skirts are not something which were imported into Papua New Guinea. Mini-skirts



Papua New Guinea Government poster

Bill and Jan Gammage collection of Papua New Guinea Posters, Pacific Manuscripts Bureau, Photo 47-19

were worn by the women of the Trobriand Islands since time immemorial. Mr Speaker, I do not believe anyone could call me a women's libber because I am still a traditionalist. However if the Government's programme relating to the advancement of women is to get off the ground, there must be many changes in men's attitudes towards their women. ...

2.10 Separatist movements and national unity

In the lead-up to self-government the rise of separatist movements underscored fears of fragmentation. These concerns reflected the broader challenge of maintaining national unity while allowing regional autonomy. In late June and early July 1973, following a mass meeting in Port Moresby by the Papuan separatist movement (Papua Besena), a heated debate emerged in the House over the political future of Papua and the proposed unity of the nation.

Papua Besena leader and House of Assembly member, Miss Josephine Abaijah (Central) strongly opposed Papua's political integration with New Guinea, arguing that Papuans had distinct historical ties to Australia and had been marginalised in national development.

21 June 1973, pp. 1892–3

... How can we sit down and say that Papuans have no rights and that they must not talk? We are constitutionally still two different countries. Unilaterally there are two countries administered together but we are still two separate countries. Papuans are on the march for freedom and I am going to march with them. I do not think anybody here has the right to stop Papuans from expressing something that they want. ...

... Why cannot Papuans govern themselves? Can anyone here tell us why they cannot govern themselves? Is anything wrong with that? We can work together on a common basis; we can go there; they can come here; we can do all these things – but why do you have to deny these people the right to govern themselves? You have development in New Guinea; there is no development in Papua. When one developed country looks after another there is always a colony. ...

> "Papuans are on the march for freedom and I am going to march with them.

In July 1973 Miss Abaijah spoke passionately of how Papuans were standing together to reject political union with New Guinea.

6 July 1973, p. 2219

... It should be obvious to everybody, Mr Deputy Speaker, that this movement is a matter of great national interest and national importance to the people of Papua and New Guinea. This may be confirmed, Mr Deputy Speaker, by the buckets of letters on the subject arriving at the 'Post-Courier' newspaper,

> "You have development in New Guinea; there is no development in Papua. When one developed country looks after another there is always a colony. ...

11 of which are published in today's newspaper. Never before have so many Papuans and New Guineans written to a newspaper to express themselves on a matter of great national concern. There is only one way that Papua can be forced into political union with New Guinea at present and that is to drag back Papua to a political union with New Guinea when it is partly handcuffed, gagged and tied. No New Guinean, Mr Deputy Speaker, with any pride or self-respect would accept a political union with a country which has been politically hijacked into such a union against the will and the determination of the people.

... Australia could try to use its authority in its last dying stages as a colonial governing power to join politically its dependent and helpless Australian Territory of Papua to the United Nations Trust Territory of New Guinea against the will of the people. Such a degrading colonial act in 1973, or any other year, would be unworthy of free Australian people who would be denying to Papuans everything they claim for themselves. Needless to say, Mr Deputy Speaker, such an act would never be recognised or accepted by the Papuan people.

... The Papuan people must decide their own future, Mr Deputy Speaker, and as free people, and anything that stops this will be a hostile act against the Papuan people.

Mr John Fifita (Kula) dismissed such secessionist activities as politically divisive and counterproductive to nation-building.

21 June 1973, p. 1887

... It has been the policy of my party to encourage unity in this country. As a leader of the Papua New Guinea National Party, I feel that this matter has to be attended to immediately by this House. To say that 'mass meetings of Papuans in Port Moresby have unanimously agreed that Papua should be governed only by Papuans who wanted to protect Papuan welfare and lands' is politically destructive to the aims and aspirations of this House to unite our people. Mr Speaker, I question in my own mind just how many Papuans outside Port Moresby would share the Honourable Member for Central Regional's view and the view of those few Papuans in Port Moresby. ...

The Minister for Information, Mr Paulus Arek (Ijivitari), believed that secessionist movements were primarily driven by demands for development rather than genuine aspirations for independence. He suggested that Miss Abaijah's calls for Papuan self-rule was part of a broader pattern of political pressure.

21 June 1973, p. 1899

... I praise her for giving free expression to her mind and her constituents' wishes in this Parliament. I think it is just the same as other areas where they make a noise to attract the attention of the Government so that the Government will take notice of them and give them some development. Once you give them development they are satisfied and settle down again. It has happened in New Guinea and it happens in developing countries all over the world. Bougainvilleans talk about breaking away and the Government has to pay attention to them, but things

> "... The Papuan people must decide their own future, Mr Deputy Speaker, and as free people, and anything that stops this will be a hostile act against the Papuan people.

there are now settled and happy. Then there was the Gazelle Peninsula affair. They do not want to break away. They talked about secession and breaking away but it was just to attract the Government's attention so that the Government would give them more development in their district. The Highlands Liberation Front is the same. It says that coastal people have taken all the jobs. It had to make a noise so that the Government would listen. The Government is now seeking to develop the Highlands. This is one of the ways of progress and Miss Abaijah is following this path. However she goes a little too far in saying, 'Papua for the Papuans', and that Papuans must break away. Which Papuans is she talking about? I come from the boundary of New Guinea and Papua and those people have no thought of breaking away. We never ever dream about it. … Since way back in 1884, when we were claimed by the British and later sold to Australia in 1906, we never have enjoyed any different treatment from what New Guineans have been enjoying all that time. Mr Speaker, this is an emotional thing and I do not want to go into history. I would like to ask where Miss Abaijah was when my Committee, which was set up by the previous Government, was struggling hard, trying to find out the wishes of the people. I travelled extensively with my colleagues trying to find out what they wanted. Do they want unity? What changes do they want in the country? As a result of that, Miss Abaijah is watching the Papua New Guinea emblem there on the wall. …

> "It must come from your heart. Unity starts in the home; unity starts in the villages; unity starts with bringing the clans together in the villages. From there unity grows.

Mr Andagari Wabiria (Koroba–Kopiago) was sympathetic to Josephine Abaijah's demands and argued that more needed to be done to promote equal development throughout the nation.

2 July 1973, p. 2140

... We should pay careful attention to the poorer and less developed areas, especially areas of no business development. These areas need to be developed equally with the rest. Because Papua has not been developed equally with New Guinea we now have this problem of Papua trying to secede from New Guinea, to become a separate State under Australian administration. This is why Papuans wish to be part of Australia and become Australian citizens. I know the motives behind the forming of Miss Abaijah's Papua Besena Movement. What she wants to achieve is equal development. She has rightly represented her own people by voicing the concern of her people, since she saw that her constituents were not receiving fair treatment from the Government as far as development is concerned. ...

Mr John Guise (Alotau) argued instead that unity must be fostered at the grassroots level rather than imposed through rhetoric or economic means.

21 June 1973, p. 1896

Mr Speaker, I submit that national unity is something that must come from one's heart. You can issue laudable statements but your very performance must be seen for people to believe. It must come from your heart. Unity starts in the home; unity starts in the villages; unity starts with bringing the clans together in the villages. From there unity grows. Are we doing anything about this? I ask a pertinent question. It is our solemn duty to do this and not to create confusion in order to gain political mileage.

Mr Tom Koraea (Gulf) firmly rejected the Papua Movement, warning that such divisions would threaten stability and undermine progress towards a unified Papua New Guinea.

24 September 1973, p. 2729

Mr Speaker, I do hate to listen to our Opposition saying that some of them support the Papua Movement. I do not want to hear that because that is how political disturbances occur. I do not want that; all I want is unity. We had two countries, Papua and New Guinea, but we have got rid of that and now we have one country, Papua New Guinea.

“

We have lost a leader … We used to sit on opposite sides of this House but we met as brothers. This is a sad day for this country.

Undersecretary for Education and Local Government Mr Matthias Tutanava Toliman answers a question in the Papua and New Guinea House of Assembly, Port Moresby.

Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales and Courtesy Tourism Australia File 01 *Walkabout* magazine Papua New Guinea 66

2.11 The death of Mr Matthias Toliman C.B.E. and Mr Paulus Arek

The Leader of the Opposition, Mr Matthias Toliman, died suddenly on 6 September 1973. He had represented the Gazelle Peninsula since 1964 and was a recognised leader of the Tolai people. After the Second World War, he abandoned thoughts of becoming a priest and became a schoolteacher.

7 September 1973, p. 2513

The casket containing the remains of the late Mr Matthias To Liman having been brought into the Chamber, the Speaker (Mr Holloway) took the Chair at 10.20 a.m. and read Prayers.

Mr Michael Somare (East Sepik – Chief Minister) – I move –

That this House expresses its deep regret at the untimely death of Mr Matthias To Liman, C.B.E., the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, places on record its appreciation of his long and devoted service to this House and to Papua New Guinea and tenders its profound sympathy to his family in their bereavement.

Mr Speaker, this is a day when we think of the loss of a leader of our people. He did not put his family first; he thought of the country. Mr Speaker, this House and our Government is seeking the advancement of our country. We lost the Honourable Leader of the Opposition yesterday. In the name of the Government and all honourable members of this House, I would like to express our deep regret to Mrs To Liman and her seven children and to his two brothers and their families. We are very sorry to lose the Honourable Leader of the Opposition; it was most unexpected.

We have lost a leader. The late Matthias To Liman and I were good friends. We were very close. We used to sit on opposite sides of this House but we met as brothers. This is a sad day for this country. We are now making all the adjustments needed for self-government and independence and have lost a child of this country, who was much loved and honoured by the people of this country. He now lies on the Floor of this House. We regret that his body is now in the centre of our Parliament. This event will become part of the history of our

move towards self-government. We have lost a big leader, a father of our country.

... The people of Gazelle and the people of Papua New Guinea cry together over his body.

Mr Tei Abal (Wabag – Deputy Leader of the Opposition)

... our brother has left us. Matthias To Liman was a teacher to me and he sat with us. He was one of us. Where has he gone? ... He was a true national leader of this country. He put his country before his family. This death came most unexpectedly to his family. It could happen to any of us.

He was a true patriot, as everybody knows. He was a good man and he had faith. He taught me and I am now desolate. ... He did not confine his thoughts to the Rabaul area, he thought of other areas like the Highlands also. We have lost a good man. ... He was a good man. It is hard to find his equal in the House of Assembly.

The death of Mr Paulus Arek, the Minister for Information, was announced on the afternoon of 22 November 1973, just eight days before self-government was declared. Following a long career as a schoolteacher and founder of the Northern District Workers Association, he won the seat of Ijivitari in 1968. He was the chair of the select committee on Constitutional Development until the 1972 election and helped lay the foundations for self-government. As Minister for Information he led the establishment of the National Broadcasting Commission. Following his funeral, his casket was brought into the chamber.

26 November, p. 3186

Mr Michael Somare (East Sepik – Chief Minister)

– I move – That this House expresses its deep regret at the death of Mr Paulus Arek, the Minister for Information, Member for Ijivitari, and places on record its appreciation of his service to this country as a member of this House, as the Chairman of the previous Select Committee on Constitutional Development, and as a minister of the Government and tenders its profound sympathy to his family in their bereavement.

Mr Speaker, in less than a week from today Papua New Guinea will be self-governing. On the same day our National Broadcasting Commission will go on air for the first time.

... Mr Paulus Arek will be remembered by the people of this country. He will go down on record with his Select Committee on Constitutional Development for bringing about this change today, which has enabled me to be the head of this Government ... I am sure the 2.5 million people of this country will regret the loss of the man who fought for what is to come.

On 1 December I will particularly remember the late Paulus Arek, because I wish that he could have been with us, his fellow citizens of Papua New Guinea, on that day. I know that I will not be alone in my thoughts.

“I am sure the 2.5 million people of this country will regret the loss of the man who fought for what is to come.

Member of the House of Assembly Mr Paulus Arek

Australia and Papua New Guinea: The transition to self-government 1970–1972, edited by Bruce Hunt and Stephen Henningham, Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, UNSW Press, 2020, between pp. 490–91

3.

Self-government to independence

> “We do not take development to be synonymous with material progress, or mere economic progress, or even with the progress of the country as such … For us the only authentic development is integral human development.

3. The last steps before independence

The journey from self-government to independence in Papua New Guinea was not a smooth or automatic transition – it was a national awakening, fuelled by public participation, political debate, and deep reflection on what kind of country Papua New Guineans wanted to build. This chapter showcases debates in the House of Assembly during this transition, from December 1973 to September 1975. It highlights how Papua New Guinean leaders had the opportunity – and the responsibility – to decide their future, to shape their own government, and to establish a constitution that would reflect their values, cultures, and aspirations.

Self-government, granted in 1973, set the stage for these developments. It allowed leaders like Chief Minister Mr Michael Somare (East Sepik) and members of the House of Assembly to begin taking direct control over national affairs. In his speech marking the first anniversary of self-government, Mr Somare proudly declared that the economy had not collapsed, nor had there been instability. On the contrary, the government had begun building institutions, delivering development, and drafting the foundations of a national constitution.

At the heart of this transformation was the work of the Constitutional Planning Committee (CPC), a fifteen-member body established by the House of Assembly in 1972. Led in practice by Fr John Momis of Bougainville, the CPC took an unprecedented approach by travelling the entire country, holding public meetings in more than one hundred centres to gather the views of ordinary Papua New Guineans. The aim was to create a truly homegrown constitution, one rooted in the realities of the country rather than imposed from abroad. As Momis explained, the CPC was not interested in copying foreign models unless they made sense for Papua New Guinea's unique context. The process was intense and inclusive, marked by a deep belief that the people themselves held the raw material from which the constitution should be shaped.

This commitment to inclusive nation-building, however, was not without controversy. When the CPC released its final report in mid-1974, it was praised by many as visionary and principled, emphasising human dignity, cultural identity, spiritual values, and national self-reliance. It defined development not as economic wealth or prestige on the world stage, but as the full human development of every citizen. Yet the government's alternative proposals – published in a white paper – sparked heated debates in the House. Some leaders accused the CPC of failing to reflect the practical concerns of villagers or of bypassing proper Cabinet consultation. Others criticised the white paper for ignoring grassroots voices and reintroducing colonial-style decision-making.

The road to independence was also marked by debate over critical aspects of governance, such as the role of the head of state and the qualifications for citizenship. On the question of the head of state, the CPC initially recommended that the duties of such a figure be shared among top leaders. However, the government – supported by both Mr Somare and Opposition Leader Mr Tei Abal (Wabag) – insisted that a separate, non-political head of state was essential for constitutional and national stability. This reflected a broader desire for symbols of unity and institutions that could help manage political transitions without crisis.

Similarly, debates over citizenship laid bare Papua New Guinea's struggle to define itself as a nation in a post-colonial world. While some, like Fr Momis, defended a strict naturalisation process to protect the rights of Indigenous citizens, others called for a more inclusive approach that welcomed long-term expatriates and fostered a multiracial society. Concerns about foreign exploitation, racial discrimination, and dual loyalties were all brought to the fore, revealing a nation still working through the complex legacies of colonial rule and economic dependence.

Perhaps the most emotional and politically fraught debates surrounded the question of when independence should occur. Mr Somare believed that the House of Assembly had the constitutional authority to set the date, and that decisive leadership was necessary. Mr Abal, on the other hand, insisted that the people themselves should determine the timing through a referendum. These debates highlighted anxieties about legitimacy, preparedness, and the potential consequences of rushing the process. Ultimately, on 18 June 1975, the House of Assembly

voted to declare 16 September 1975 as the date of independence – a decision later endorsed by Australian Prime Minister Gough Whitlam, who pledged his country's full support.

The lead-up to independence was also shaped by powerful speeches and debates on the deeper meaning of freedom. Figures like Miss Josephine Abaijah (Central) warned against recreating systems of domination within Papua New Guinea itself, while Mr Somare called for unity based on shared Melanesian culture and identity. Fr Momis argued that true independence required more than political change; it meant shedding colonial mindsets and building a society grounded in justice, dignity, and local values.

The path from self-government to independence was a defining moment in Papua New Guinea's national story. It was a time of hope, tension, and transformation – of difficult choices and bold visions. Above all, it was a moment when Papua New Guineans stood together and declared that their destiny would be shaped by their own hands, on their own terms.

3.1 The people's constitution of Papua New Guinea

On 23 June 1972, Papua New Guinea's House of Assembly had established the Constitutional Planning Committee to draft a homegrown constitution through an open, nationwide consultative process ahead of independence. There were public meetings held in more than one hundred centres in all the sub-districts of Papua New Guinea. Chief Minister Mr Michael Somare (East Sepik) was appointed chairman, but it was the deputy chairman, Fr John Momis (Bougainville) who was the effective leader of the committee and considered the father of the constitution by many.

Members of the Constitutional Planning Committee

Mr Tei Abal	Mr Paulus Arek	Mr Angmai Bilas
Mr Mackenzie Daugi	Mr Sinake Giregire	Mr John Guise
Mr Toni Ila	Mr Pikah Kasau	Mr John Kaputin
Mr John Kaupa	Mr Paul Langro	Fr John Momis
Mr Anton Parao	Mr Michael Somare	Mr Stanis Toliman
Mr Matiabe Yuwi		

In the House, Fr Momis recounted the tireless efforts undertaken by the Constitutional Planning Committee to consult the people of Papua New Guinea and to reflect their voices in the nation's foundational document.

16 August 1974, p. 4143

... We members of the Constitutional Planning Committee toured the length and breadth of this country and worked seven days a week. I assure you that this is true. Despite my reputation as a clergyman and a devout Christian, I worked on Sundays with my fellow committee members because we understood the importance of the constitution. By working seven days a week we managed to cover a lot more ground. About six or seven areas were visited and the people's views were collected within one day. We strongly feel that we have assessed the situation in Papua New Guinea. We got the raw materials, which the people themselves gave us, and then we sat down and refined them. We defined some of the values and the goals that we think the people of this country want.

In drafting a national constitution, Momis emphasised the importance of creating a document that genuinely reflected the unique cultural diversity, political needs, and aspirations of the people of Papua New Guinea.

28 February 1974, pp. 3249–50

... it is clear from our work that the report will be a substantial document dealing with many issues fundamental to the political system of Papua New Guinea and to the future development of our society. In our deliberations we have also been conscious of the need to reconcile the diverse interests in Papua New Guinean society. In accordance with our charter to produce a home-grown constitution we have explored new parts; we have accepted established constitutional precedents only when we have been sure that they are relevant to Papua New Guinea. This task has not been an easy one.

“
Despite my reputation as a clergyman and a devout Christian, I worked on Sundays ... because we understood the importance of the constitution.

... I think many of the members understand that Papua New Guinea contains many races of people with different backgrounds, so we want to draw up a constitution suited to the requirement of the many different races. If we do not take a realistic approach to these problems now we will suffer problems in future. The committee, working under the advice of the Chief Minister, feels that the constitution must be drafted to suit the people and must be geared to help achieve all the aims and aspirations of the people of Papua New Guinea. When the constitution is drafted it will be based on the principles of law and not based on constitutions adopted elsewhere.

Whereas while Mr Somare praised the inclusive and consultative approach taken by the Constitutional Planning Committee, he argued the most pressing issue was the creation of a document that recognised both collective identity and regional empowerment within a united Papua New Guinea.

Constitutional Planning Committee Final Report, *Department of Information and Extension Services, January 1973*

Nigel Oram papers, Pacific Manuscripts Bureau, MS 1371, Item 78, p. 3

25 June 1974, pp. 3791–2

When the Constitutional Planning Committee was established to make recommendations for a constitution it travelled throughout every district, including all Papuan districts, meeting the people to hear their views. The Constitutional Planning Committee's public meetings showed that political union was supported by our people on both sides of this artificial border. This is the way we govern a united country. No district or region dominates and no district or region is overlooked.

Mr Speaker, development as one nation does not mean that we must cease to have pride in being members of our own social group. It does not mean that various regions should not have the political power, within the nation state, to guide their own development. This is a constitutional question and has been considered by the Constitutional Planning Committee in its report. The committee is recommending a system of powerful provincial governments to ensure the preservation of this form of regional identity. When this House debates the report it is open to any member from Papua or from the New Guinea side to make other proposals along these lines. All this is possible within the framework of one nation.

3.2 Constitutional Planning Committee Final Report

The Constitutional Planning Committee Final Report was released by Fr John Momis (Bougainville) to the House of Assembly on 27 June 1974. In his speech outlining the report he emphasised a vision of development grounded in respect for people, cultural heritage, moral integrity, and the pursuit of an independent national path. He asserted that Papua New Guinea should take ownership of its future with confidence and self-trust. He argued that, through this lens, the committee's recommendations would foster social justice, national unity, and the empowerment of all citizens to shape their own destiny.

27 June 1974, pp. 3840–2

Our recommendations therefore are geared towards building a society which will bring genuine human development to our people. I feel at this juncture of Papua New Guinea's

development it is important to define exactly what we mean by 'development'. Every day the term 'development' becomes more and more ambiguous. Indeed sometimes it seems to imply contradictions. As there is no reason to think that all men will ever mean the same thing by the term 'development' or that the confusion resulting from the use of the term will lessen, it would seem advisable to state here what is meant by the term when it is used with reference to Papua New Guinea. ...

... We do not take development to be synonymous with material progress, or mere economic progress, or even with the progress of the country as such. Development is not to be measured by the actual or latent wealth of the country, or its power or military might, or the vastness of its industrial enterprises. Nor is development the same thing as the country's political influence, or the prestige Papua New Guinea might enjoy at any time among her neighbours or in the world family of nations. All these things have value, but taken singly or together they fall far short of the meaning we give to development in Melanesia. For us the only authentic development is integral human development.

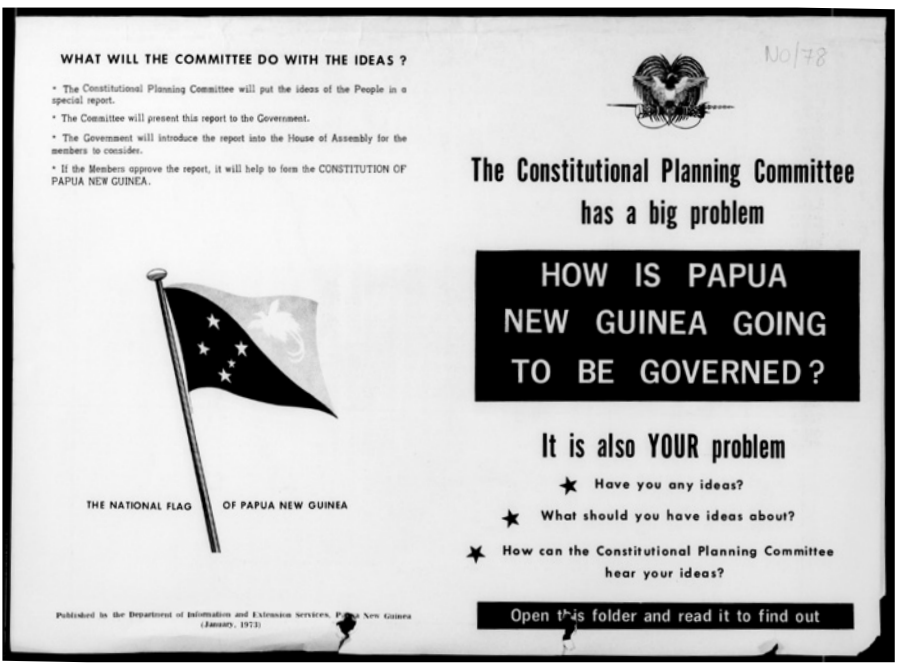
No particular area or group of people should be developed at the expense of another, materially or in other ways. There must always be evidence of a certain equitable distribution and balanced sharing of all the benefits and opportunities the nation has to offer. No free Papua New Guinean of whatever age, sex or condition has forfeited his right to integral human development. For this type of development to come into being, it is necessary for such conditions to be created and to obtain throughout the nation at all times as to be conducive to such development. ... The best judges therefore of what contributes to the full human well-being of the people

> "People are the common denominator of progress, improvement and development. To envisage development without attaching due importance to our cultural heritage and progress would be obviously disastrous to our national identity.

of Papua New Guinea should be found among the Papua New Guineans themselves. In hardly any other matter is self-reliance more necessary. …

… This is the place for social justice which is not just a part of general justice, nor of legal justice, nor rules regulating intermediate societies; but rather that which gives life to all the social order at the international, national and local levels, and directs and optimises the common good. In all men and women there are other essential needs than the merely economic. Men and women certainly need bread, but they do not live by bread alone. People are the common denominator of progress, improvement and development. No genuine improvement is possible without improved people; and development is certain when all men and women, and the whole man and woman are actively caught up in the process. …

… In the Christian faith, which is what the vast majority of Papua New Guineans adhere to, the very basis for each person's right to an equal opportunity


WHAT WILL THE COMMITTEE DO WITH THE IDEAS ?
* The Constitutional Planning Committee will put the ideas of the People in a special report.
* The Committee will present this report to the Government.
* The Government will introduce the report into the House of Assembly for the members to consider.
* If the Members approve the report, it will help to form the CONSTITUTION OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA.
THE NATIONAL FLAG OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA
Published by the Department of Information and Extension Services, Papua New Guinea (January, 1973)
The Constitutional Planning Committee has a big problem
HOW IS PAPUA NEW GUINEA GOING TO BE GOVERNED ?
It is also YOUR problem
Have you any ideas?
What should you have ideas about?
How can the Constitutional Planning Committee hear your ideas?
Open this folder and read it to find out

Constitutional Planning Committee Final Report, *Department of Information and Extension Services, January 1973*

Nigel Oram papers, Pacific Manuscripts Bureau, MS 1371 Reel 3 Item 78, p. 1

for development is found in the universal brotherhood of man under the Fatherhood of God. This fact alone emphasises the importance of the spiritual and religious elements in full human development, while it supports our stand that merely materialistic goals or norms of progress are both spurious and dehumanising. Closely tied in with the spiritual and religious features of Papua New Guinean traditions are the cultural elements of the nation. Here we are in touch with the spirit of the people, with their roots and their authentic, creative genius. To envisage development without attaching due importance to our cultural heritage and progress would be obviously disastrous to our national identity.

… For too long we have been directed by the Australian Government what to do and we should find answers for ourselves. The Australian Government has found the answers to our problems and has taught us to accept without question. These times are over. We are not to act as the child all the time. When a man grows up he has to get married and earn his own living. I am sure there is nobody who is a child all his life. Papua New Guinea in the same way has now grown up.

I realise that many of us are afraid because we do not know how we should manage ourselves during this transitional period, but I believe that we should trust Papua New Guineans. I realise that we do not have all that we need within our country; I also realise that we do not have enough educated Papua New Guineans,

“I am sure there is noboby who is a child all his life. Papua New Guinea in the same way has now grown up.

but we must trust ourselves and have a sense of expectation within us. Nobody can take from a person his sense of expectation. You can imprison a person or do whatever you like, short of taking his life, but you cannot kill his spirit to develop himself, help his friend and his country. We must have faith in this and be happy to carry the burden of the development of this country.

So the committee’s recommendations on all the terms of reference have one thing in common and that is to improve the conditions and the relations of the people. …

3.3 Nationhood, debate, and the making of a constitution

As Papua New Guinea edged closer to independence in 1974, debates over the nation's proposed constitution grew increasingly charged, revealing deep concerns among leaders about foreign influence, public consultation, and national identity. The Constitutional Planning Committee's Final Report, followed by the government's contentious white paper, sparked vigorous discussion in the House of Assembly. Politicians from across the spectrum wrestled with how to balance grassroots participation, national unity, and the urgent need for a homegrown constitution that genuinely reflected the values, concerns, and aspirations of the people of Papua New Guinea.

In his address to the House of Assembly, Opposition Leader Mr Tei Abal (Wabag) reminded members that the constitution is a national document beyond party politics which would form the foundation for Papua New Guinea's future governance.

4 July 1974, p. 3901

... this is not the constitution of one particular political party.

> "The constitution shall be the basis on which our country will work in the future.

This is the proposed constitution for our country, Papua New Guinea. Therefore, when we speak to it, we must be conscious of what we say because this could have some effect on the final report when changes are made to it. The constitution shall be the basis on which our country will work in the future. This is not the constitution of one particular party. Thus there should be no competition as to who does what to it. This, when enacted, will become the constitution of Papua New Guinea under which governments of the future shall run the country.

Following the tabling of the Constitutional Planning Committee's Final Report in June 1974, the government released an alternative white paper (Proposals on constitutional principles and explanatory notes 1974). Its publication provoked furious debate on the floor of the House of Assembly.

16 August 1974, p. 4142

Mr Abal

… The 15-member Constitutional Planning Committee has also carried out a very important task in tracing the possible future destiny of Papua New Guinea. They have put in a lot of effort to make this report possible and we must not attack them strongly without the due respect for the report. They have taken into account a lot of submissions and ideas. They, in fact, are some of the most experienced men on the political scene today in this country. It is true that they seek advice from experts at times, but I know that they feel very strongly about certain matters concerning this country. We must realise that they have put in a lot of time and work to compile this report. It will be too confusing if some ministers support the White Paper while others oppose it. The back-benchers and the Opposition really will not know which to support. …

19 August 1974, p. 4180

Mr Damien Kereku (East New Britain)

I would like to point out clearly that all the people have been waiting quite a long time to see what has become of their views that were presented to the Constitutional Planning Committee. However it seems that these people will be angry when their ideas and thoughts are not included or a totally different report is adopted by this Parliament.

This is a very important thing for our people. They have long desired to bring their views and ideas to the Government of this country so that a constitution could be enacted that would suit the people and accommodate their customs and beliefs. This was the basic idea behind the setting up of this committee

Many people are asking where the Government's White Paper has come from. If this White Paper can be produced in this manner it means that powers of government held by Canberra have been transferred to Papua New Guinea. But if decisions are made as in the colonial days, without due concern for the people and if this constitution allows foreign control in this

country, it will weigh heavily on the people of this country. I believe that, if the Government's Minority Report, the White Paper, does not consider the disparity in the living conditions of foreigners and the indigenous people of this country, the conflict between these two groups of people will continue.

20 August 1974, p. 4223

Mr John Maneke (West New Britain)

... I was saying that the Government is at fault, that the White Paper which it produced has caused a lot of confusion in this Chamber. Mr Speaker, Papua New Guinea is probably the last country in the world to gain independence and it is, at present, at a very critical stage – the formation of a constitution by which this country will govern itself. ...

During the House debates there were accusations that the Constitutional Planning Committee (CPC) did not reflect the legitimate ambitions of village people and had not consulted sufficiently with the Cabinet.

19 August 1974, p. 4183

Mr Ron Neville (Southern Highlands)

... the Constitution should, and is supposed to, reflect the feeling of the people. Some things have been stated in the constitution to which the average person in the village could not have made any real contribution. I say that for the following reasons. Firstly they were not adequately consulted, despite the many statements to say that they were. Secondly many are matters that would not ordinarily occur in the day-to-day life of the ordinary village people. Thirdly – nor, Sir, with respect – would any member of the CPC have any knowledge of some of the measures and statements that have been made in the report. ...

“Some things have been stated in the constitution to which the average person in the village could not have made any real contribution.

Mr Pikah Kasau (Manus), a member of the CPC, refuted such accusations, arguing instead that the committee genuinely engaged with the public to gather their ideas and did not impose its own agenda.

19 August 1974, pp. 4194–5

... Mr Deputy Speaker, we were also accused of brainwashing the people. We did not brainwash anyone. When we went out to meet the people we sat with them and asked for their ideas. If we had brainwashed the people, then we would never have gone to Manus, for example, for this purpose. I think these accusations were just made for the sake of criticising us. Mr Deputy Speaker, as I said already, I am one of the 12 members of the CPC who is now being regarded as a bad man in Papua New Guinea. The Minister for State said that we did not consult Cabinet. We did contact Cabinet a number of times, but we could not contact the Cabinet all the time because of the conflict between us.

In a passionate plea during the constitutional debates, Mr Sergius Arek (Ijivitari) stressed the urgency of finalising a clear, locally grounded constitution, warning against wasting the significant time, effort and limited resources already invested in the process.

20 August 1974, pp. 4218–19

... in this constitution things must be made simple and clear. Mr Deputy Speaker, it must be simple and clear for the people. Thirdly this cost a great deal of time and money and now we are rejecting it. We are putting ourselves down. We are not thinking about it. We will defeat ourselves in the House and will have no constitution. We must somehow get one and somehow compromise together to make one up now, otherwise a great deal of money will have been wasted. A lot of time will have been wasted: the hard work will have been wasted. It has cost time and money, so somehow we must think very carefully to draft this constitution properly. Do not put it away and appoint

“We did not brainwash anyone. When we went out to meet the people we sat with them and asked for their ideas.

another committee to go around. I do not want that. It costs too much money. Papua New Guinea does not have enough money; we are crying for money; the Northern District is crying for money. We are never helped. So the committee must not go around again. We have to think very carefully to make this constitution simple enough and easy enough for everyone to understand and we must be happy about it. This constitution must not be adopted from some foreign country; it must come from Papua New Guinea itself.

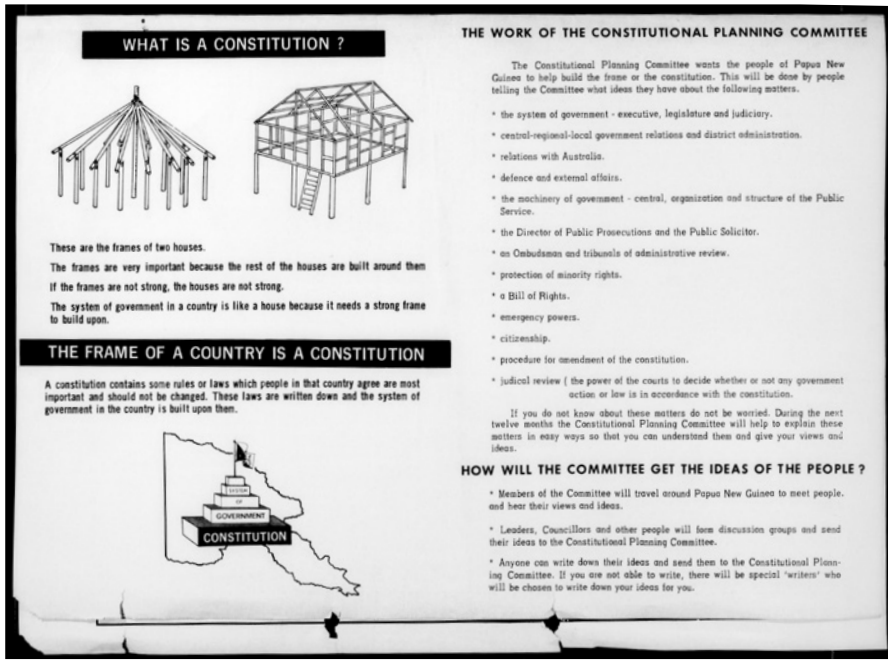
As Papua New Guinea approached independence, Fr John Momis (Bougainville) addressed growing public anxiety by calling for a constitution rooted in local realities – not foreign models – that would respond to the nation's unique history, needs, and aspirations.

3 October 1974, p. 4652

... Many people are pretty scared now that we are approaching independence. Many people do not believe that we are all but independent. Many have heard rumours about revolutions and many other disasters. And many believe that it is bad to achieve independence now. We therefore must now look to a new political deal which is responsive to the needs and aspirations of the emerging people of Papua New Guinea. This is constitution making.

"
... Many people are pretty scared now that we are approaching independence.

The people of Papua New Guinea have been assured that this new political deal will answer many of their questions. However if we import Australian concepts and implement them, the people's problems will never be solved. If something is wrong, how can you forget about it. Plenty of people say to forget about the past; however this can never be done. Whatever happens in the future and the present depends on what happened in the past. Therefore, to make new changes, you must change the effects of the past. Therefore we are now talking about changing and adopting a system that will be more suited to the people. We are now speaking about introducing a system which will be more responsive to the needs of the people.


WHAT IS A CONSTITUTION ?
These are the frames of two houses.
The frames are very important because the rest of the houses are built around them
If the frames are not strong, the houses are not strong.
The system of government in a country is like a house because it needs a strong frame to build upon.
THE FRAME OF A COUNTRY IS A CONSTITUTION
A constitution contains some rules or laws which people in that country agree are most important and should not be changed. These laws are written down and the system of government in the country is built upon them.
GOVERNMENT
CONSTITUTION
THE WORK OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE
The Constitutional Planning Committee wants the people of Papua New Guinea to help build the frame or the constitution. This will be done by people telling the Committee what ideas they have about the following matters.
* the system of government - executive, legislature and judiciary.
* central-regional-local government relations and district administration.
* relations with Australia.
* defence and external affairs.
* the machinery of government - central, organization and structure of the Public Service.
* the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Public Solicitor.
* an Ombudsman and tribunals of administrative review.
* protection of minority rights.
* a Bill of Rights.
* emergency powers.
* citizenship.
* procedure for amendment of the constitution.
* judicial review (the power of the courts to decide whether or not any government action or law is in accordance with the constitution.
If you do not know about these matters do not be worried. During the next twelve months the Constitutional Planning Committee will help to explain these matters in easy ways so that you can understand them and give your views and ideas.
HOW WILL THE COMMITTEE GET THE IDEAS OF THE PEOPLE ?
* Members of the Committee will travel around Papua New Guinea to meet people, and hear their views and ideas.
* Leaders, Councillors and other people will form discussion groups and send their ideas to the Constitutional Planning Committee.
* Anyone can write down their ideas and send them to the Constitutional Planning Committee. If you are not able to write, there will be special 'writers' who will be chosen to write down your ideas for you.

The work of the Constitutional Planning Committee
Pacific Manuscripts Bureau, MS 1371, Item 78, p. 2

3.4 Should we have a head of state?

During pre-independence discussions in the House of Assembly, questions about Papua New Guinea's future international affiliations and political structure emerged, including whether the country would retain ties to the British monarchy or pursue a republican model.

In this exchange, Opposition Leader Mr Tei Abal (Wabag) sought clarification from Chief Minister Mr Michael Somare (East Sepik) on whether an independent Papua New Guinea would appoint a president or a governor-general as its head of state if it chose to join the Commonwealth.

7 March 1975, p. 5622

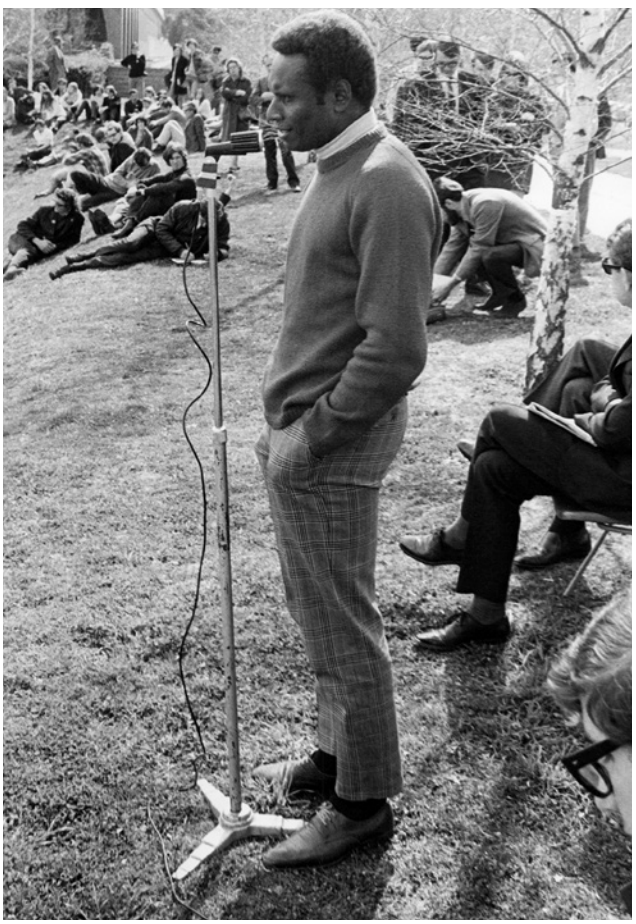
Mr Tei Abal (Wabang)

... If we join the Commonwealth, will we call our Head of State the President or the Governor-General?

“
... If we join the Commonwealth, will we call our Head of State the President or the Governor-General?

“

… If a person is appointed as Head of State he must not be involved with politics. We must make sure he does not get involved in political activities.



Mr John Kaputin, Mataungan leader from Papua New Guinea, addresses a lunchtime Moratorium gathering on the Library Lawn, Australian National University, 1970

Australian National University Archives, Photographer Gab Carpay

Mr Michael Somare

... When it becomes a republic and a member of the Commonwealth, it will receive assistance from other Commonwealth countries. When a country has a constitution and enters the Commonwealth it often recognises Her Majesty the Queen as its titular head as most ex-British colonies have done. Her Majesty the Queen would appoint the Governor-General in this case. On the other hand we could have a constitution which provides for the Head of State to be known as the President. If this happens we will not have any ties with the English Monarch. If we feel that we should become a member of the Commonwealth, we can apply when we become independent as did Australia, Canada, some countries of Africa and Fiji. If we apply, we can become a member of the Commonwealth of Nations. If and when we become a member of the Commonwealth after independence, we will have our own Head of State. Until then it is up to the people of this country to decide with whom we should have our ties.

Mr Somare and the government's white paper firmly rejected the Constitutional Planning Committee's (CPC) recommendation to forgo a distinct head of state, arguing that such a position was essential for constitutional continuity, stability during elections, and resolving high-level disputes.

16 August 1974, p. 4141

... Mr Speaker, the Constitutional Planning Committee recommended that there should be no Head of State, but the Government does not agree with this, because we would be sure to face problems in the running of our country in the future. I think we would be the only country in the world which did not have a Head of State.

26 November 1974, p. 5164

Mr Deputy Chairman, there is a fundamental difference between the Government's proposal in its White Paper on this chapter and the recommendation of the CPC. ... The fundamental difference with the CPC recommendations concerns the Head of State issue.

The Government proposes that there shall be an office of the Head of State as the constitutional head. The CPC, on the other hand, recommends that there is not to be a separate Head of State, but his duties shall be shared by the Prime Minister, Speaker, Foreign Minister and others. The Government opposes this proposal of the CPC because it believes there should be a separate Head of State from the parliamentary head, who is the speaker and the government head who will be the Prime Minister. Over the parliamentary head and the government head there must be a constitutional head who will be the Head of State. …

> “Over the parliamentary head and the government there must be a constitutional head who will be the Head of State …

… the Government believes that the position of Head of State is of major importance to the country. There are reasons for the necessity of his position. For one, we do not have a titular head, as the white men put it, as the Head of State. However today in such a Parliament as we have and the sort of system that we have adopted, consideration must be given to this matter. The Head of State will act in place of the Government when a new General Election is being held or when the Government is dissolved.

The Government strongly feels that there should be a Head of State because, during the three months that the Parliament is dissolved, major issues may come up and someone must be there to make the decisions in place of the Government.

The position of the Head of State is also important in the settlement of constitutional and ministerial disputes among office holders. …

Mr John Kaputin (Rabaul) was not convinced and questioned how constitutional authority would function in the event of conflicting leadership between a prime minister and a head of state from different regions of Papua New Guinea.

26 November 1974, p. 5171

It is true for us to say that the Head of State could act as an arbiter in constitutional disputes which may arise between ministers or

the Prime Minister and one of his ministers. However, I would like to question the case where the Prime Minister is New Guinean and the Head of State a Papuan. With the existing traditional differences between the two sides, what would happen if the Prime Minister supported a certain principle while the Head of State supported a different one? How then would a constitutional dispute be dealt with and by whom? In our society, when the headman directs us to follow him, we do as he says. However, if we are going to have a Head of State as well as a Prime Minister, to which of the two should the people turn to as their leader?

Opposition Leader Mr Abal agreed on the necessity of a head of state and that it should remain non-political and that it was crucial for safeguarding national governance in times of crisis – aligning both leaders on the need for a symbolic and stabilising figure at the top of the nation-state structure.

26 November 1974, p. 5173

... If a person is appointed as Head of State he must not be involved with politics. We must make sure he does not get involved in political activities. If a General Election has to take place owing to certain problems in the country, the Head of State would be responsible to look after the governing of the country. But in fact it still does not mean that he will have a similar position to the Governor-General or the Queen. For this reason the United Party has recommended in its report that we must have a Head of State in this country. ...

3.5 Who qualifies for Papua New Guinean citizenship?

In the lead-up to Papua New Guinea's independence, fierce debates unfolded around the complex issue of citizenship, revealing a nation grappling with how to balance national identity, racial inclusivity, and the role of expatriates in its political and economic future.

16 August 1974, p. 4142

Mr Tei Abal (Wabag)

... The six members of the United Party told me that, on the citizenship issue, the Constitutional Planning

Committee proposed that, instead of expatriates waiting for 20 years before they could become citizens, for every 10 years they had been in the country they would have to wait one year less. I at that time sought clarification on the issue from the appropriate adviser and I was told that the issue was being approached from a different point of view. …

16 August 1974, p. 4146

Fr John Momis (Bougainville)

… Here I would like to ask one question. I have no grudge against the white men in this country, but I would like to ask you: what will these white men lose when the citizenship recommendations of the Constitutional Planning Committee come into force? Will any member be able to tell me a thing that will cause suffering on the part of these white men? They will lose nothing and they will suffer nothing. Nobody in clear conscience can tell me anything that will happen to these people. These people are already well settled in our country so what will they lose – nothing. But our own 3 million people, what have they got – nothing. For political expediency are we going to sell the rights of our people?

The Constitutional Planning Committee tried to promote a society in this country in which there will be participation by everyone. …

19 August 1974, p. 4184

Mr Ronald Neville (Southern Highlands)

… Sir, in speaking generally to the constitution it would appear to me that the whole pattern of this constitution, first in making citizenship a big issue, and second in its racist requirements, is completely out of step with the rest of the South Pacific area where all other countries are coming to independence with the peaceful help and co-operation of the former governing country. Unlike some newly independent African countries, no one here has had to spill his blood to get independence and this racist element appears to be entirely false.

Sir, as a clear example of a peaceful emergence, Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, Prime Minister of Fiji, during his recent trip to

Papua New Guinea said that his country now has a more fruitful and affectionate relationship with Britain than it had before independence. Despite the utterances of some, I am quite convinced that the majority of people in Papua New Guinea have an attitude of sincere affection for Australia and its nationals who have developed this country and who, in fact, have done far more for Papua New Guinea than the British ever did for Fiji. …

Mr Galopo Masa (Kandrian–Gloucester) emphasised the importance of fostering a multiracial society and warned against restrictive policies that could deter foreign investment crucial to the country's future development.

19 August 1974, p. 4203

… there should be no racial discrimination. Everyone should work together as a multi-racial society and develop this country. The populations of other countries include the nationals of those countries plus naturalised citizens. In Hong Kong, for example, there are Americans, Japanese, Germans and English living and working there and it is the same in Manila and other South-East Asian countries. Most of these people have been naturalised and they now regard themselves as citizens of the country in which they are living.

In Papua New Guinea we must consider this question of citizenship carefully and give every possible assistance to foreign investors who wish to come to this country and help in the development of this nation. If we prohibit foreign investors from coming to this country, I am sure we are going to face problems in the future. …

“
… there should be no racial discrimination. Everyone should work together as a multi-racial society and develop this country.

Mr Timothy Ward (Esa'ala) reflected on global movements towards racial understanding and unity, urging that Papua New Guinea's constitution should foster inclusion and humanity rather than perpetuate division or historical grievances.

20 August 1974, pp. 4225–6

… Mr Speaker, we are living in an age of greater content and understanding than ever existed before in the world. Hands of sympathy and understanding are reaching across the ocean to assist people in far distant lands who have, are and will forever, suffer greater hardships than our minds can comprehend. In America, Australia and other nations with bad histories of racial hatred and inhuman treatment of [A]boriginal inhabitants, a new awareness is replacing the old arrogance and suspicions. A greater spirit of unity is evident between those who are descendants of the old inhabitants and those who came later and colonised their lands.

“
… we live in an age when nationalism has become less important than simple humanity, as barriers are broken down between peoples of different ethnic, social and economic backgrounds

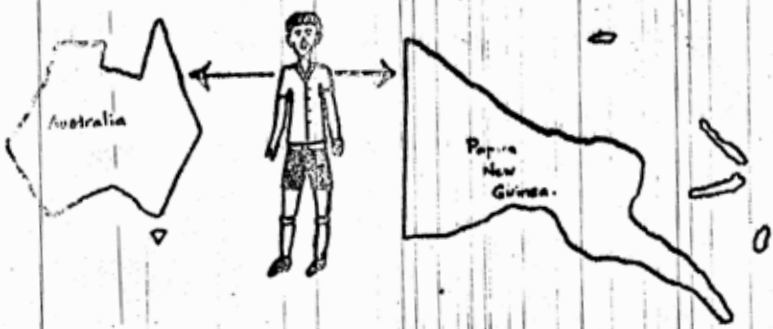
It is neither easy or simple to create a new building from one which has fallen under a reckless hammer, but, Mr Speaker, it is possible. What has been proposed within the pages of the CPC report is not a project of rebuilding a previously ruined society, but a completely new fabrication. It is a fabrication using untried material and it could very well succeed. …

… we live in an age when nationalism has become less important than simple humanity, as barriers are broken down between peoples of different ethnic, social and economic backgrounds. The United States Watergate affair has shown the bitter result of a super nationalist taking the direction of his fellow citizens on his own initiative with his own set of peculiar moral standards by which he judged his own actions, legal or otherwise.

… Let us admit that nothing will ever repay those people in the past who suffered under three or four different colonial powers in Papua New Guinea. But let us also admit that the great majority of those who live in Papua New Guinea do so because it is a good place to live. The Australian colonial system, if it was truly this and

SOME PROBLEMS THAT THE CONSTITUTIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE WANTS TO HEAR YOUR OPINIONS ABOUT.

Question One



Should a person
be able to be a citizen of Papua New Guinea
and another country at the same time?
or
Should dual (double) citizenship be allowed?

What the Constitutional Planning Committee thinks

The Committee says
a person should not be able to be a citizen of another country
and also be a citizen of Papua New Guinea.
If a citizen has rights in one country,
he will love that country
and work to help it develop.
He cannot do this if he belongs to two countries.

Although Papuan people are Australian citizens by law,
very few can go into Australia to live.
After self-government
they will become citizens of Papua New Guinea.
They will not belong to two countries,
only to Papua New Guinea.

Information Paper prepared for the Constitutional Planning Committee
National Archives Papua New Guinea

not a benevolent paternalism, has achieved miracles within the short period after the Second World War. …

This report will not correct the ills of the past, nor will it provide a safe secure path for the future because the problems of human beings living with one another are not simply black and white, Sir, or even grey. The problem will always – constitution or no constitution, super nationalists or no super nationalists – boil down to the differences which lie in every one of us. Constitutions and nationalists never made people into a united force. Constitutions which separate any people from others automatically add fuel to the fires within each person of distrust for one's fellow man.

The Constitutional Planning Committee recommended that most people would acquire citizenship by naturalisation. They were not in favour of dual citizenship, a stance strongly supported by Mr Tei Abal (Wabag) and the United Party.

3 October 1974, p. 4636

… the United Party strongly opposes the idea of dual citizenship. We want single citizenship. The Government has supported our proposal of provisional citizenship. The members should be clear on this, otherwise they will vote mistakenly on the issue. We, the United Party, believe in giving everyone a fair chance to enjoy his or her freedom. We do not want to introduce a racist type of law, banning non-indigenous people from this country. If we did this, we would be getting rid of our brothers-in-law and other good friends. Our Government is not sleeping, as many members have said. We are doing something for the good of the people and the country.

… If we wanted to make this country a black country, that would be quite all right, but we

“This report will not correct the ills of the past, nor will it provide a safe secure path for the future because the problems of human beings living with one another are not simply black and white …

must make sure we do not turn out to be racist. We can always be given the chance to purchase some of the expatriate-owned businesses if this provision is agreed to. It appears to me that a lot of us have been confused over the whole issue and that we do not speak facts. We do not support the recommendation of Father Momis and his committee regarding citizenship. We feel that only certain people should be given Papua New Guinea provisional citizenship. People such as Mr Middleton and others living in the Highlands, Rabaul and other regions could be given provisional citizenship. If a non-

> “We do not want to introduce a racist type of law, banning non-indigenous people from this country.

Papua New Guinean person wishes to apply for Papua New Guinea citizenship, there will be a Citizenship Commissioner who will determine whether this person should be given Papua New Guinea citizenship. …

During parliamentary debates on the Migration (Amendment) Bill 1975, members of the House, including Sir Maori Kiki (Moresby Inland) and Mr John Kaupa (Chuave), discussed the tightening of migration laws to ensure that non-citizens – particularly expatriates – would not have automatic rights to reside in Papua New Guinea after independence, unless they qualified for or applied for citizenship.

3 March 1975, pp. 5525–7

Sir Maori-Kiki

The changes that are proposed will affect only non-nationals. I repeat: non-nationals, or non-citizens or in other words aliens, as they will be called after independence. …

… Expatriates who intend to make Papua New Guinea their own country will eventually have the option, where qualified, to apply for citizenship and therefore to be regarded in a different light. Persons not qualified or not wishing to be citizens should not possess an automatic right to live here.

11 March 1975, pp. 5712–13

Mr John Kaupa

...We often talk about foreign exploitation, how foreigners used our people to get what they wanted. If we are not careful in making the necessary migration laws, we will still have these problems after independence. If this happens independence will mean nothing to the people of Papua New Guinea.

If a non-national takes up Papua New Guinea citizenship, he should first have his foreign citizenship terminated. But if he wants to live in this country and not become a citizen, he will be regarded as a foreigner until he becomes a Papua New Guinea citizen.

During this 11 March 1975 debate on migration and citizenship laws, Mr Oscar Tammur (Kokopo) emphasised the need for Papua New Guinea to scrutinise the intentions and loyalties of foreigners residing in the country, advocating that only those willing to fully commit to singular citizenship should be granted the right to stay.

pp. 5713–14

When I visited other countries, I was told to take off my shirt and shoes and even a gun was held at my back. We in Papua New Guinea do not do this to foreigners entering our country to take up jobs or merely as tourists. Do we not have any sympathy for our people, our resources and our traditions? I am not saying that the foreigners should not be allowed into our country.

“
If a non-national takes up Papua New Guinea citizenship, he should first have his foreign citizenship terminated.

What I am trying to point out is that we must be certain of what sort of foreigners are coming into our country. Moreover, whether they have foreign citizenships is a matter for the House of Assembly to consider. Furthermore we should not be over excited just because they are paying a good deal of money. What do you want to do with the money – send a spaceship up to the moon? ... I am not saying that we should send the businessmen back to their countries. They can stay in our country, but, Mr Deputy

Chairman, if these foreigners would like to stay in our country they must certify it in black and white. They must indicate that they are citizens of Papua New Guinea and if trouble occurred they would die for the country and for the people. These are the kind of people who should be granted Papua New Guinea citizenship.

I think that we should not have foreigners who have other citizenship living in our country, but we should have foreigners who have one citizenship. I am not referring to those people who have a limited amount of time to help the Government. However I am pinpointing those foreigners who have business interests here who have taken out most of the money invested here.

While Sir Kiki argued Papua New Guinea would welcome a diverse, multiracial citizenry, he agreed that it must rigorously screen those entering its borders to protect the nation's integrity without resorting to racial discrimination.

11 March 1975, p. 5718

... Mr Chairman, when independence is achieved this country will become in its own right the country of Papua New Guinea. These people who are regarded as Papua New Guineans will consist of people of different coloured skin. One group of Papua New Guineans might have black skin like us and the other might have white skin like our colleagues over in the corner, and another group might have a yellow skin just like the Chinese. However this law does not create a distinction between the racial groups. If we find a person who has done something wrong, he is sent back to his country. As I said already, if we achieve independence, this country will be ours. We must screen people who wish to enter our country carefully.

3.6 One year of self-government and national resolve

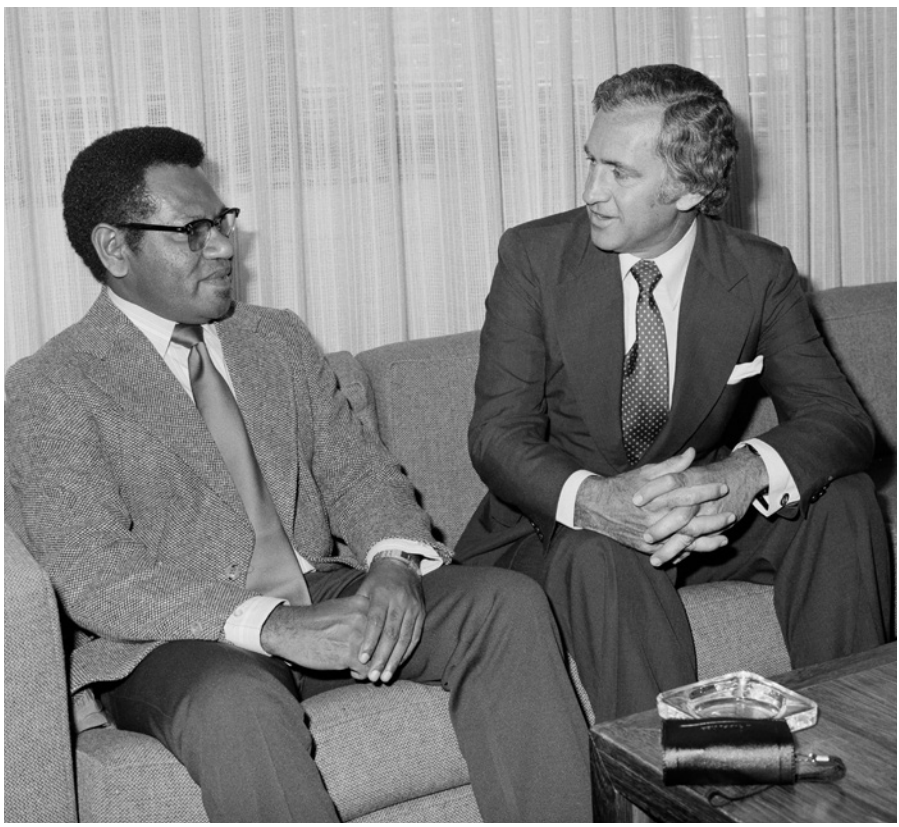
On 2 December 1974, Chief Minister Mr Michael Somare (East Sepik) addressed the House of Assembly to mark the first anniversary of Papua New Guinea's self-government, highlighting the nation's economic progress, the drafting of a homegrown constitution, and the need for collective responsibility and self-reliance as the country moved confidently towards full independence.

p. 5262

... Mr Speaker, it is one year since this country achieved self-government. There have been no major mishaps during this period of self-government and independence is not far away. We have come together and we are here to help the country. ...

... Mr Speaker, I would like to say that this is an important day for us to think about because it was a common belief of many people, a false belief, that we would not be able to handle our affairs during self-government.

... We have taken steps towards having a constitution drafted. This has been a year of great economic progress in this country. Since 1968, people have been predicting that once we took over the economy would collapse but we have been running our own affairs for one year and



Deputy Chair of the Constitutional Planning Committee Fr John Momis, seen here with Australian politician Mr Andrew Peacock, 1978.
NAA: 11619823

the economy has improved. My Government has been thinking of controlling most of the things in this country. ...

The constitution, the major foundations of this country, is one of the achievements of this country. This would ensure that our country goes on developing economically and that we create the type of government which is needed for this country. Many people have criticised the constitution. Many people have travelled around South-East Asia and Europe but I have not. Many countries do not provide the people with an option to choose the kind of constitution the people want, but in this country we are lucky; we have been given that option. Many people have said there would be a revolution in this country, but I would like to mention the revolution in the administration of this country and here I am not talking about blowing up the place and causing trouble. I am talking about changing the viewpoints and major policies of the public servants who are there to carry out the policies of the government of the day and of the politicians.

... We have the area authorities, local government councils and the House of Assembly and these are the forms of government where we have people participating in the running of the country. I would like to say that public servants must meet the needs of the people and the politicians of this country. Mr Speaker, everyone should participate in nation building. Each one of these is participating in the development of the country. There must be new ideas and political and economic development in the villages. Mr Speaker, we can win if all the people believe that we are capable of developing our country; however if we sit back, do not contribute and criticise the contributions of others, we cannot build this nation.

Similarly we members of this Parliament, area authorities members and members of other such bodies must participate in this operation. I ask what is the difference between the

> “... Mr Speaker, it is one year since this country achieved self-government. There have been no major mishaps... and independence is not far away.

functions of the Government and each member; what roles do the members of the Parliament play? At times we speak about economic development in the country; now we are on our march towards independence, yet independence does not mean that miracles should be performed to achieve our goals. We must not entertain the idea that things will fall from the sky. We must see ahead to what we want to achieve in the country. We must visualise ways in which we can build our country. We must have courage and determination to achieve our goals.

> “We must have courage and determination to achieve our goals.

I believe we are quite capable of solving our problems. The Australians will give us financial help where possible; however they will not give us directions as to which ways we should follow.

Many people have the idea that the Australians will come into the country and help us to build the country. This will not be the case – It is just like having to build a house ourselves. In nation building, as I said, we cannot allow others to come and build our nation.

3.7 The struggle to set Independence Day

During a June 1974 debate on setting the date for independence, Chief Minister Mr Michael Somare (East Sepik) argued that the elected House of Assembly had the rightful authority to decide, while Opposition Leader Mr Tei Abal (Wabag) insisted that the decision should come from the people through a national referendum to ensure broad-based legitimacy.

25 June 1974, p. 3790

Mr Michael Somare

Mr Speaker, the first point I want to make is to repeat my belief that this House has the duty to set the date for independence. We are the representatives of our people. The House has already decided that it should adopt a leadership role on the timing of independence. On 9 March 1973 the House passed a motion which read, in part, that this House –

‘... affirms its right, as the duly elected Parliament of the people, to decide when independence is to come’.

Papua New Guinea Government poster

Bill and Jan Gammage collection of Papua New Guinea Posters, Pacific Manuscripts Bureau, Photo 47-20

27 June 1974, p. 3819

Mr Tei Abal

... Consequently the people of Papua New Guinea are saying that it is they who should select the date for independence. Therefore we are trying to ascertain accurately the views of the people from the community leaders, the area authorities and councils through a referendum. I feel that a referendum is a good thing. It is not very good for the members of the House of Assembly to determine the independence date on the grounds that if our country does not function properly in the future, the people will say that only a small group of 100 men in the House of Assembly decided upon the date for independence and therefore the blame rests with them. ...

> “
> ... self-determination is for the people of Papua New Guinea, not just for members of the House of Assembly.

... The United Nations Trusteeship Charter stated that we have the right to become self-determining and we have to choose our path to independence. This self-determination is for the people of Papua New Guinea, not just for members of the House of Assembly. The Trusteeship Council of the United Nations clearly pointed out that we have to consult the people to determine their views on this matter. Therefore we in the United Party believe that self-determination is a subject involving the community as a whole. We should not just ignore the views of the people and go ahead with what we want; I feel that is not the right procedure.

Twelve months later, in June 1975, Mr Somare continued to urge the House of Assembly to set a firm date for independence, stressing a need for decisive leadership to prepare the population, whereas Mr Abal continued to oppose and delay what he regarded as too early a date for independence.

18 June 1975, pp. 5855–9

Mr Michael Somare

Mr Speaker, the time has come for this House to make a firm decision on the date for independence. Our people everywhere are waiting for us to make up our minds, to take the initiative, to show that we are not weak and indecisive. We are the nation's leaders. The time has come to lead. We have put this off for too long. Let us act now.

Not only our own people, but other countries too – in Australia, in England, in the United Nations, amongst our friends in the South Pacific – all know we are approaching independence. They keep asking: 'When is your independence day? What are you waiting for? What is wrong?' They want to come and join us to celebrate our day. They want to make their plans. There is nothing to stop us now. …

I am asking every member of the House to support me so that we can join together to decide on this date and make this day of independence a time that will bring us all great rejoicing – a day that our children and their children will always remember. …

Over the last three years we have been running a self-governing Papua New Guinea and have come across several obstacles during the course of our administration. But what does that matter! We have at least succeeded in running the country during that stage and have brought it almost to independence. Nobody has been hurt. Our country has been calm. We do, of course, have some problems created several years ago, but if we argue over them too much, we may never be able to solve those problems. If we put our heads together and think about them more seriously, no doubt we can find solutions to them.

"We are the nation's leaders. The time has come to lead. We have put this off for too long. Let us act now.

pp. 5860–1

Mr Tei Abal

I do not support the motion that the date for independence be set at this stage. I would like to have a good constitution for Papua New Guinea first.

I move – That the following amendment be made: That the words '16th day of September

1975' be omitted and the words '1st day of December 1975' be inserted in place thereof. ...

The date for this country to achieve independence is too early. We should have the basic laws and the organic laws of the country entrenched in the constitution first before anything else that the Chief Minister mentioned earlier could be arrived at. I am not against the idea of this country's becoming independent on the date proposed. There are people back in my electorate who have told me that independence is something that we should not worry about. However first they would like to see a good constitution drawn up which will provide the basic law of the country before anything else should happen. We should understand that a constitution is the only weapon that a country could use to defend itself from being attacked by foreign dominance.

> "I do not support the motion that the date for independence be set at this stage. I would like to have a good constitution for Papua New Guinea first.

I do not want to go back to my electorate and tell my people something that is really against their wish. What I would like to see is that we should deal with the basic laws of the country before dealing with other things. I am not speaking against the idea of this country's becoming independent. However I have an amendment here that will be later debated. My reason for bringing this amendment is to amend the date proposed by the Chief Minister, which is 16 September 1975, by putting in its place 1 December 1975. This is to allow all the organic laws to be entrenched in the constitution before the question of independence can be dealt with.

In June 1975, following the House of Assembly's nomination of 16 September as Papua New Guinea's independence date, Australian Prime Minister Gough Whitlam formally endorsed the decision, reaffirming Australia's support for a united and independent Papua New Guinea.

20 June 1975, p. 5912

MR MICHAEL SOMARE

The Prime Minister said in a telegram:

Mr Michael T. Somare
Chief Minister of Papua New Guinea Port Moresby.

My dear Chief Minister,

Thank you for your message of 19 June 1975 informing me that on 18 June 1975 the House of Assembly nominated 16 September 1975 as the date upon which Papua New Guinea is to achieve independence.

The date nominated by the House of Assembly is acceptable to the Australian Government. I confirm that steps will be taken to pass the Independence Act in the Australian Parliament citing the date of 16 September.

May I offer you my congratulations on the historic decision which the House of Assembly has taken and express to you my profound admiration for your success in steering Papua New Guinea to full nationhood. I look forward to continuing close co-operation between our two Governments and our two nations.

I take this opportunity to reaffirm to you that the Australian Government's policy is that Papua New Guinea should come to independence on 16 September as one country, in accordance with the wishes of the overwhelming majority of Papua New Guinea's elected representatives. The Australian Government will give no sympathy, aid or support in any form to any group in Papua New Guinea working to undermine their country's unity. In accordance with our obligations to the United Nations, the Australian Government has a responsibility to the people of Papua New Guinea to help them ensure that on Independence Day they are citizens of a strong and united country.

"

The Australian Government will give no sympathy, aid or support … to any group in Papua New Guinea working to undermine their country's unity.

I am arranging for the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the President of the Trusteeship Council to be advised of your decision and the Australian Government's agreement that Papua New Guinea is to achieve independence on 16 September 1975.

Yours sincerely,
(Sgd) E.G. Whitlam
19 June 1975.

3.8 Reclaiming identity after colonial rule

As Papua New Guinea approached independence, some leaders engaged in a broader conversation about what true freedom meant – not just in political terms, but in reshaping national identity, dismantling colonial mindsets, and forging unity.

Miss Josephine Abaijah (Central) warned against recreating internal systems of domination, calling out the risk of 'wicked colonialism' by Papua New Guineans themselves.

8 March 1974, p. 3407

Mr Speaker, it is frightening to me that Papuans and New Guineans, if only a few, are working desperately to make a new colonial set-up in our country instead of planning for a nation of free people and the union of free people. We are worse than the worst white colonialists because we are engaged in wicked colonialism.

> "We are worse than the worst white colonialists because we are engaged in wicked colonialism.

The role of Papua, Mr Speaker, or its right to freedom or independence, has never been considered by the Constitutional Planning Committee. It has merely taken the assumption that Papua will not be free and then spent its entire time on this matter in trying to rationalise the decision already made. There is no chance, Mr Speaker, of New Guinea colonialising Papua except by force and against the will of the people. Then it would only have a temporary reign as the last colonial power in the world and it would soon go the way of all the colonial powers. ...

In a call to reject colonial divisions, Chief Minister Mr Michael Somare (East Sepik) reminded fellow leaders that long before foreign borders and administration, Papuans and New Guineans shared deep cultural ties. He urged a return to Indigenous unity, grounded in common identity, values, and traditions that predate colonial rule.

25 June 1974, p. 3791

Fellow leaders, look at our history. On both sides of that artificial border we are Melanesians. We speak more than 700 different

languages, but basically we are the same. We have the same love of our families and the same reliance on our kin and relatives. The 'wantok' system applies to us all. Long before the white men made colonial subjects of us there were ties of culture and trade right throughout this island. What do Highlanders use for bilas and bride payment – the shells from the coast! Do you find pigs only as a status symbol in New Guinea? No, they are an important symbol in Papuan life too. Our underlying culture is the same.

When the white men came then we Papuans and New Guineans were not strangers to each other. We were already gradually coming together. It was the white men who drew a line across our country and called the top part New Guinea and the bottom part Papua. That line cut right across our social groups and tribal lands, but of course these 'border people' have always ignored this line. It has had no effect on their day-to-day social lives.

Mr Matiabe Yuwi (Tari–Komo) reflected on the colonial era's disregard for human rights, contrasting it with growing local awareness of freedom and justice.

27 August 1974, p. 4373

It is true to say that quite often we tend to say a lot about human rights, freedom and so on, but years ago these words were never mentioned – were never referred to – when the foreigners were dealing with our people in this country. Am I correct or not? I think I am right. The colonialists did not think about the rights of the people of this country.

"

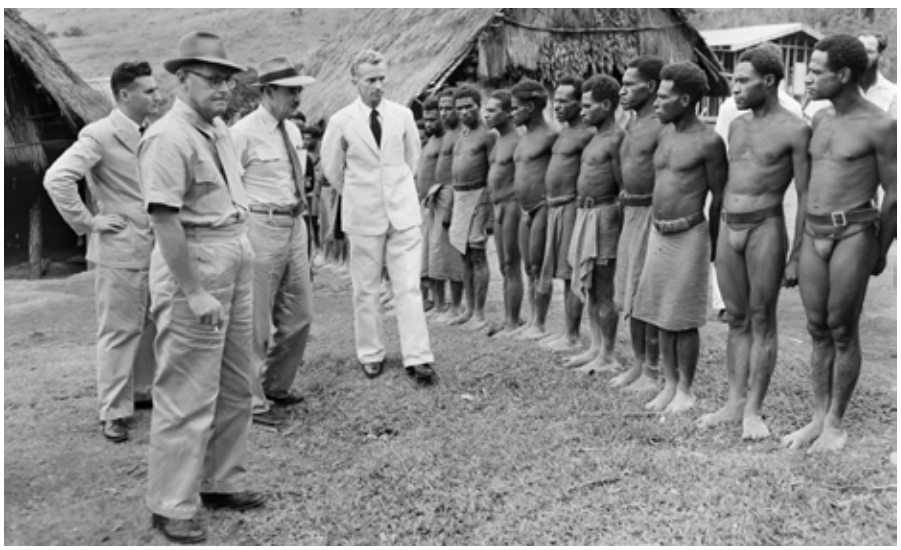
It was the white men who drew a line across our country ... but of course these 'border people' have always ignored this line. It has had no effect on their day-to-day social lives.

Fr John Momis (Bougainville) reflected on the deeper meaning of independence, arguing that true freedom required more than political change – it demanded emancipation from the colonial structures that continued to shape institutions and mindsets.

27 September 1974, p. 4508

The subject on which I am going to talk is the struggle for real independence for Papua New Guinea.

From the time one enters school to the time one leaves, one is drilled to believe that at the end of the long road to independence whether political or economic – independence is never clearly defined to the people – complete emancipation would have been achieved and that the Papua New Guinean would be a free man in his own country. For those who were not so fortunate to enter school, either through lack of time or facilities, government officials and church organisations took care of them. We received the same message in the meetings and in the church. So, in fact all of us, men and women, young and old, have been told in one way or another that some day we will be free; there will be independence for all. Even today we have a government that is predominantly black. We have 100 members in this Parliament who have reached here from all parts of Papua New Guinea, and in each of our districts there are other levels of government. All these institutions have been set up by the colonial regime.



Minister for Territories Paul Hasluck on an official party visit to a village in the Highlands, 1955.
NAA: 1163489

3.9 Balancing unity and autonomy: debating provincial government

The question of provincial government in Papua New Guinea sparked wide-ranging parliamentary debate in 1974 and 1975, with leaders expressing both support and concern over how decentralisation would function in practice – focusing on the balance of power between central and local authorities, the role of cultural identity, the potential for administrative conflict, and the importance of financial autonomy and clarity in governance structures.

Chief Minister Mr Michael Somare (East Sepik) spoke of the importance of balancing national unity with regional autonomy and cultural identity. The issue of secession drove his speeches and was uppermost in the minds of politicians.

25 June 1974, p. 3790

> Mr Speaker, development as one nation does not mean that we must cease to have pride in being members of our own social group. It does not mean that various regions should not have the political power, within the nation state, to guide their own development. This is a constitutional question and has been considered by the Constitutional Planning Committee in its report. The committee is recommending a system of powerful provincial governments to ensure the preservation of this form of regional identity. …

In response to a question from Mr Angmai Bilas (Madang) about the future of provincial government elections, Mr Somare outlined the Government's position that the successful establishment of provincial governments depends on local initiative, organisation, and capacity to manage administrative and financial responsibilities.

13 August 1974, p. 4077

> … The Government has taken one step further to set up provincial government in Bougainville because people over in Bougainville have organised themselves and have made it possible to hold elections in August and they have worked out a development plan. It is the people who have

to organise themselves. The Government cannot just give provincial government to anybody who wants provincial government. I think honourable members of this House should be aware that finance is involved, administration, public service and all the other relevant matters that concern governments. Provincial government is a small government in a district. In a district where we have a provincial government we would have these problems of having to staff the district, getting the public servants, the amount of money that a district would raise and amount of money that the Government would give to the district. I think that, if people are prepared to have provincial governments, people must first of all organise themselves. After organising themselves and if they think that provincial government can work effectively, I am sure the Government would only be too willing to agree to provincial governments in this country.

Some House members argued that it was very important to clearly define the relationship between provincial and central governments and that ultimate authority should rest with the central government. Special mention was made of the constitutional disputes and ambiguities seen in Australia.

19 August 1974, p. 4194

Mr Pikah Kasau (Manus)

> “We have 100 members in this Parliament … from all parts of Papua New Guinea, and in each of our districts there are other levels of government. All these institutions have been set up by the colonial regime.

… a major difference between ours and the Australian system is that, if the Australian government of the day wants to make any important decision, the government has to conduct a referendum, whereas here we will not need to. The National Parliament will be able to make the decisions on any issue[s] of importance which arise. Another thing we recommended in the [CPC] report is that if there is any

constitutional dispute between any provincial government and the central government, the central government must win on most occasions.

4 March 1975, p. 5581

Mr Perry Kwan (Madang)

States should be subordinate to the central government as they are in Australia. However the trouble with the Australian system is that it uses the English system of State government which it inherited, and the federal system which it borrowed from America's system. The powers were not clearly defined. Owing to this fact, the State governments challenge the Federal Government over offshore mineral rights. This is one of the major examples that can be seen today as a problem in this system of government. If we can define the powers of the provincial governments and the central government now and also learn from the mistakes the other countries have made, we should not have any immediate problem in running our country.

Both Mr Somare and Mr Bilas agreed on the importance of establishing effective provincial governments. While Mr Somare pragmatically argued that the relationship between provincial and local councils would need to be carefully managed to avoid administrative conflict, Bilas expressed frustration over the perceived imbalance in how provincial autonomy and resource distribution were being implemented. Debates in the House on the establishment of provincial governments covered issues such as resource disparity, regionalism, and the need to balance central and local authority.

4 March 1975, p. 5574

Mr Michael Somare

... I know that provincial governments will compete as the local government councils have done in the past. The local government councils will not know what their district governments are doing. The provincial government might set up its own policies on tax. The local government councils might not agree with them. That is how conflicts may arise. The

Papua New Guinea Government poster with Motu and Tok Pisin words for 'unite', seeking to bridge the Papua – New Guinea divide

Bill and Jan Gammage collection of Papua New Guinea Posters, Pacific Manuscripts Bureau, Photo 47-21

local government councils will complain that their provincial government is interfering with their work. If there are 10 local government councils and a provincial government in my district, I am very certain that there will be disagreement over who should be the more powerful authority in that district. This is one of the problems we will face. Therefore it is the duty of each and every one of us as the leaders of this country to consider ways of solving these problems so that the provincial governments will run smoothly; otherwise nothing will work at all.

p. 5579

Mr Angmai Bilas (Madang)

... There are over 700 different languages and as many dialects in this country. Why did the Government grant provincial government to Bougainville so quickly? That is a mistake the Government has made. The first step in the series of types of governments the people have been given was the luluai and tultul system. The next step was the council system and the people have found it difficult to be self-reliant. Now we cannot go back to colonial ideas. Now that our young people have been educated, they would like to go back to their home districts to help develop them. Although I support the idea of provincial government in principle, I feel that certain districts could break away if their governments are not given sufficient power. It is true that our Government has many things that it would like to do. My feeling is that it is important that the local government council system in this country be abolished if provincial government is to be instituted. We are too familiar with the false pretence of the local government councils in forcing taxation on the people for certain promised works. The people, in anticipation, have paid a lot in tax with little or no return. On top of that the Government

“Now we cannot go back to colonial ideas. Now that our young people have been educated, they would like to go back to their home districts to help develop them.

taxes the same people and it spends this taxation revenue in the districts claiming that it is grant-in-aid for the districts. I only wonder where revenue from each district's resources goes. Mr Deputy Chairman, it is very true that the Government is surviving only because of the resources of the various districts in the country. It is also very true that development in these very districts is not balanced. Some districts have a variety of resources while others do not have any. One of the points in the eight-point plan is that self-reliance must be emphasised. To make this a reality, the districts have to work hard.

10 March 1975, p. 5690

Fr John Momis (Bougainville)

Provincial governments will have only their political strength to counter the weight of the central government's power, and in cases where there is a strong disagreement between a provincial government and the central government, the central government is likely always to win. This is because under the Government's proposals, a national law – and I agree with this – would always override a provincial law. Even if there was no national law dealing with a particular matter which a provincial assembly had dealt with by passing a law, the central government could easily have Parliament pass a new national law dealing with that subject, so as to frustrate the provincial government.

> "We are always talking about the decentralisation of powers and this is where we see this process come into effect.

p. 5691

Mr Stanis To Liman (Bogia)

I feel that the provincial governments should have the power to raise their own district revenues, but should also receive grants from the central government. The provincial governments also should have the power to buy and collect

taxes from produce sales taxes, petrol, fuel and oil taxes, from entertainment taxes, land taxes, customs taxes, mobile trading taxes, liquor licences, motor car driving and registration licences, district court fines, etc. The provincial governments should also have power to spend money or kina and toea up to K150,000 in their rural development programmes.

11 March 1975, p. 5755

Mr Tei Abal (Wabag)

The amendment [from Abal] of the United Party merely requests that districts be given appropriate powers and substantial financial support by the central government to be able to carry out the functions of their provincial governments effectively. If the Government declines this request by opposing the amendment it should be prepared to accept criticisms from the people.

p. 5739

Mr Oscar Tammur [(Kokopo)]

...if any member opposes the idea of having provincial government, I would like to point out that provincial government is in line with the Government's eight-point plan. We are always talking about the decentralisation of powers and this is where we see this process come into effect. I think many of us are confused about this matter. Provincial government, Mr Deputy Chairman, is only a small government representing the people of a district, but it should only have power to make decisions at the district level.

3.10 Secessionist movements and the struggle for unity

Debates in the House of Assembly revealed deep tensions over national unity, with secessionist sentiments emerging from both Papua and Bougainville. The debates highlighted government efforts to preserve unity, the divergent views of separatist leaders, and the broader struggle to balance regional identity, historical grievances, and equitable development.

“

… next week, Mr Deputy Speaker, Papuans are going to make a declaration in which they will become independent. They will get their independence. Nothing will stop them …

Miss Josephine Abaijah

The Australian Trusteeship, Ian Downs, between pp. 502–3

In answer to concerns about Papuan secession, Chief Minister Mr Michael Somare (East Sepik) acknowledged ongoing tensions with the Papuan Action Group, while reaffirming the government's commitment to a unified Papua New Guinea under the terms of the *Papua New Guinea Act 1949*.

5 December 1974, p. 5337

The Papuan Action Group has met with the Papuan Ministers but was not satisfied with our decisions and so the group has taken a petition to the High Commissioner asking the Australian Government what it shall do about Papua. The Papua New Guinea Act of 1949 states that both countries shall be administered as one. Most of the districts, area authorities, and councils have indicated that they want a unified Papua New Guinea. However agreement has still to be reached between the Papuan Action Group and the Government.

In response to a question from Mr Pikah Kasau (Manus) about a possible unilateral declaration of independence by Papuan separatists, Mr Somare downplayed the movement's significance, stating it did not reflect the will of the broader Papuan population, who largely supported a united Papua New Guinea.

10 March 1975, p. 5674

Mr Speaker, this matter has not been brought to my notice; all I know is that there was a meeting held and they decided there would be a unilateral declaration of Papua's independence on Sunday. Mr Speaker, I do not know the reasons for this but understand that this is for the people living in the city of Port Moresby alone. If it had been the views of the whole of Papua, I would consider taking steps on this, but area authorities and local government councils have sent telegrams and letters to me giving their full support for this country's becoming a united Papua New Guinea.

“The Papuan Action Group … has taken a petition to the High Commissioner asking the Australian Government what it shall do about Papua.

In a passionate speech to the House, separatist leader Miss Josephine Abaijah (Central) warned that continued government inaction and dismissal of Papuan concerns would lead to an inevitable unilateral declaration of independence, reflecting growing frustration and determination among Papuan people.

10 March 1975, p. 5700

There is only one thing, Mr Deputy Speaker, and that is that this problem will not be solved and next week, Mr Deputy Speaker, Papuans are going to make a declaration in which they will become independent. They will get their independence.

> “We do not want to be talked into selling our land. This is our land and nobody is going to take it away from us.

Nothing will stop them and all these things going on in this Parliament are an attempt to kill the Papuan issue. Everything which comes up here is put under the carpet and people are saying it has nothing to do with Papuans. All the problems we have here have something to do with the Papuan issue and, unless the Government takes this matter seriously, there will be no hope of solving any problem in this Parliament. Members must take careful note of what I am saying because the Papuan people have woken up to themselves now and nobody is going to stop them from achieving what they want. This matter of public importance is an attempt to kill the Papuan issue.

The way I see the situation now is that, as most of the Papuan senior public servants are involved in the Papua Besena Movement, this is an attempt to stop these senior public servants.

We do not want to be talked into selling our land. This is our land and nobody is going to take it away from us. All the talk going on now is just an attempt to kill the Papuan issue. Do not think that this will stop here, because it will not. If the Government believes that the drawing up of all kinds of legislation will solve the problems, it is wrong. Nothing is going to stop the Papuan people from achieving what they want. ...

... I want to see Papua a separate country from New Guinea and this is also what the people want. ...

Mr John Guise (Alotau) was a well-known Papuan leader who had previously spoken in the House about his deep personal and cultural ties to Papua.

24 September 1974, p. 4439

Mr Speaker, may I remind this Parliament that I am a Papuan, if not a New Guinean. My grandchildren are from both sides; my daughter-in-law is from New Ireland. They are dear to my heart and no power on earth will ever separate me from them nor from my native homeland of Papua. Mr Speaker, here I am; here shall I remain; here shall I die; and be buried by my Papuan wife, family and relatives. If any authority wants to deport me or deprive me of my Papuan heritage to make me a stateless person, there is only one way to deal with me. That is to put me before a firing squad and shoot me beside my home.

As a senior Government Minister, Papuan leader and committed supporter of a unified Papua New Guinea, Mr Guise was an outspoken opponent of the Papuan separatist movement.

12 March 1975, pp. 5771–3

Mr Speaker, as a result of a joint meeting of Papuan MHAs and senior Papuan government officers this afternoon, I wish to inform the honourable members on both sides of this Parliament that I have been given unanimous support to make this statement in the Parliament on the plans for unilateral declaration of independence or so-called declaration of independence for Papua on Sunday 16 March 1975. Mr Speaker, I want to inform this Parliament that all the members who represent the Papuan people in this House do not support the planned unilateral declaration of Papuan Independence and disassociate ourselves from it. …

… members of this National Parliament know that it is not an

“
If any authority wants to deport me or deprive me of my Papuan heritage to make me a stateless person, there is only one way to deal with me. That is to put me before a firing squad and shoot me beside my home.

easy matter to run a government of an independent country. No one knows what the leaders of this group will be doing after declaring the so-called unilateral Papuan Independence. We do not know how they will run the government – this so-called government. I ask: will they have the financial resources to carry out the planned programme for development? These are some of the questions that bother our minds because these leaders have not done anything constructive whatsoever for the majority of the Papuan people who we represent in this House. Mr Speaker, what they achieve on Sunday will be a shallow political objective, but will it be beneficial to the majority of the Papuan people? ...

... People are important, but this importance will only be realised if that organisation will serve the interests of the Papuan people for which it is established. But if that very objective cannot be achieved the silent majority in Papua must suffer as the result of the interests of the selfish few.

Chief Minister Somare condemned Bougainville's push for secession as a betrayal of national unity, affirming that while the government had made significant concessions, the integrity of Papua New Guinea must remain non-negotiable.

17 June 1975, pp. 5842–4

Mr Speaker, I want to make a brief report to this House about the things that have happened in the last few days. For the first time in our short history there is serious talk about breaking away.

> "I want to inform this Parliament that all the members who represent the Papuan people in this House do not support the planned unilateral declaration of Papuan Independence and disassociate ourselves from it. ...

Following the establishment of a provincial government on Bougainville under interim arrangements, a central government team led by the Minister for Finance, Mr Julius Chan, met representatives of the provincial government to discuss a range of financial matters in December last year. The meetings were conducted in a

friendly atmosphere and, at least from the central government's point of view, in good faith.

The most important points in the agreement stated that all royalties on copper extracted after 30 June 1975 were to be paid to the Bougainville Provincial Government, to be spent at its discretion and according to its own priorities, and that the Bougainville Provincial Government would continue to negotiate its capital works programme annually with the central government. …

Bougainville has received and enjoyed many other advantages over and above what has been given to other districts. Because of this there are limits to how far the Government can go in giving further, favoured treatment to one district at the expense of other poorer districts. I think any member will agree that this is just and reasonable. Mr Speaker, perhaps some members will criticise the Government for being too soft and giving in too much to Bougainville. Our reason for doing this is that Bougainville provides a larger share of revenue to Papua New Guinea and therefore is justified in asking for more. …

On Wednesday 11 June I was amazed to learn that the Bougainville delegation would be coming over to discuss, not the works programme, but the terms under which the Bougainville Provincial Government planned to leave the Papua New Guinea family and become an independent nation. Secession, they said, was a non-negotiable issue. …

I believe that every member of this House and every right-thinking citizen will agree with me when I say that national unity is also non-negotiable. More than this: it is our sacred trust and what we all believe in. National unity is something no individual or group can violate or be allowed to discard or destroy just because it suits an unprincipled selfish political desire.

“National unity is something no individual or group can violate or be allowed to discard or destroy just because it suits an unprincipled selfish political desire.

The laws we have passed in this House are for every man in every village in every district, including Bougainville. If anyone says this

does not apply to Bougainville or Papua or East New Britain he has already betrayed his trust and denied his oath of office. The very people who turn around and encourage secessionism call themselves nationalists – all those noble ideals and principles we have heard about, Sir, the lofty aims of the Leadership Code apparently mean nothing. Yet some have made empty accusations of corruption against this Government.

In a passionate defence of his constituents, Bougainvillean leader Fr John Momis rejected accusations of Bougainvillean greed and secessionist ambition, arguing instead that local demands stemmed from historical grievances, exploitation, and a desire for dignity, fairness, and self-determination.

19 June 1975, pp. 5879–83

Mr Speaker, during the last two weeks the people of Bougainville and their leaders have received a bad name. Many people think that we are selfish and greedy and have always asked for special consideration. Because of this I would like to reply to some of these criticisms. …

The provincial government was established because of pressure from the Bougainville people. He [Chief Minister Somare] called me the Regional Member for Bougainville and it looks as though I have been accused of putting pressure on the Government by asking for favours for us. I would like to say that this is not true. The talk on secession is not a recent matter; it existed during the colonial administration. … Instead I strongly recommended that the Government should make a positive response to the demands of our people and try to set up the interim provincial government in order to show our people that the Government was doing all it could to help them. I do not believe this has come through great pressure by us, as the Chief Minister said. I did not make any recommendation for my benefit only, but I made it as my duty as an elected representative and a man who had worked with the committee in drawing up a constitution for national unity. …

… The development of Bougainville did not come from the assistance of the Administration. This development came through the

hard work of the missions – and I say this not because I am a priest. The people still remember the past development. They can recall that they were used as tools in plantations to raise revenue to finance developments in towns. Secondly many people have said – and I also read some editorials in some Australian newspapers – that we planned to break away because we are greedy for the money the copper produces. … We must remember, it is true, that a part of Papua New Guinea's finance has been channelled to Bougainville, but we must also remember that part of it has been spent on infrastructure, institutions and towns that give no direct benefit to the bulk of the population of Bougainville. Most of the money that goes to Bougainville is spent on improving the facilities at the mine. The money raised by the mine does not only belong to Bougainville and it does not only go to the National Government for everybody. But the problems and difficulties are being faced by the people of Bougainville. Therefore the people of Bougainville must have the right to some compensation for what has happened to them and their property. …

I know there are some members in this House who have said that, if Bougainville did not have the copper mine, it would have been forgotten already. If these people think we are selfish, why do members say such things? Are we only good for our copper, or is there anything wrong with our right to make decisions about our own possessions? That is why I have stood up here to speak on behalf of my people. I am not only talking about copper. It is more in line with something of the past and this Government has had a long time to examine it. However I feel that the attitude of this Government is no different from the previous colonial administration's. The Government is only trying to make things more difficult for us. When we react, we are told

> "… The development of Bougainville did not come from the assistance of the Administration. This development came through the hard work of the missions – and I say this not because I am a priest.

that we are greedy and selfish with the copper. …

…We know that the integrity we are losing cannot be paid for with money. We must think very carefully about this. If the same thing happens in another district, we must try to preserve the culture and dignity of the people. We must not let money or material things destroy the pride and dignity of people. Some members have said that we are selfish and yet others have said that, if we did not have any copper, we could be forgotten. I would like to put this question to members: who is selfish?

3.11 Land ownership and economic nationalism

While there was broad support for reserving plantations for Papua New Guineans and affirming land as a national asset, the discussions also revealed deeper tensions – between foreign investment and sovereignty, between colonial legacies and justice, and between customary systems and modern development.

27 June 1974, p. 3830

Motion by Mr Suinavi Otio (Lufa)

That this House calls on the Government to introduce legislation and formulate policies so that land holdings and plantations being offered for sale by expatriates should be reserved for Papua New Guinean citizens and that Japanese and other foreign investors should start their own plantations so as to ensure that the investment of fresh capital will lead to an increase of productive land areas in Papua New Guinea.

p. 3832

Mr Oscar Tammur (Kokopo)

I for one fully support this motion … I do not object to the Japanese entering our country as investors in fields of development, but that does not mean that we have to give them all the plantations and so forth. We cannot afford to give away to foreign investors what Papua New Guineans are quite capable of doing themselves. Sir, I am not too happy with the part of this motion which provides for the purchasing of Papua New Guinean land for foreign investors. I would not have minded if it read that

foreign investors could lease that land, but I cannot see the point in selling our land to foreign investors.

4 July 1974, p. 3905

Mr Sinake Giregire (Daulo)

... Papua New Guineans as individuals cannot afford to buy big plantations, whereas a co-operative society can afford to buy. The co-operative societies and the local government councils have the necessary finance for buying plantations. When the Constitutional Planning Committee tables its report in the House of Assembly the co-operative societies in Papua New Guinea and individually owned small businesses will eventually collide with each other. What will happen to the co-operative societies and the people if the plantations are bought by the local government councils? These are the two points I wish to express. The co-operative societies and the people in the rural areas want to work to gain profits so that the businesses will operate well. These local government councils are like the Government in some ways. ... They want power to be given to the district bodies. This merely means that the district administrations will control 60 per cent of the economic development with no benefit for the people. Therefore this country will lose the individual benefits for the people. ...

p. 3907

Mr Anton Parao (Western Highlands)

... I believe that everything in this country belongs to the people of this country. This is our God-given land and that means that whatever is on this land is ours. There must not be any other person of another country who can claim the ownership of all these things, and that goes for land, timber, water, people and you name it. Anything that is on our land is ours. I feel very sad every time I

> “We cannot afford to give away to foreign investors what Papua New Guineans are quite capable of doing themselves.

hear on the radio about loans and foreign companies being brought into this country to exploit our resources. …

… I was born in this country and so this is my country. This is also very true of 90 per cent of the members of the House of Assembly. They can claim that this is their country. Therefore we should not pretend that we are in this country to attract foreigners who would develop our country, so much so that we ended up in heaven or wherever we are headed for. Mr Deputy Speaker, money is not everything. Money is here to stay. Therefore we should not sell everything we have to get money. …

Debate raised concerns about the legacy of colonial land alienation and called for the return of plantations to Papua New Guineans – stressing both the importance of restoring land to its original owners and the need for careful negotiation to respect customary ownership and prevent new conflicts.

pp. 3909–10

Mr Michael Pondros (Manus)

Mr Deputy Speaker, I think it is high time the people of this country worked on their land for their benefit. Mr Deputy Speaker, before we were born, expatriates

> “… before we were born, expatriates came with the sole intention of taking whatever resources they could find on our land for their own benefit.

came with the sole intention of taking whatever resources they could find on our land for their own benefit. Some of them came with the Bible into this country during the early days, but their real intentions were far from spreading the Word. In fact when they landed they forgot all about the Bible and started to squat on our people’s land.

A common word used by these people in the early days was ‘discover’. This word is very ambiguous because people were already living in Papua New Guinea. If our land was uninhabited then, it could have been the right term to use. There were people living in this land when the first white man arrived and even long before that. This motion specifically

refers to plantations. There are these plantation owners from Britain, Germany, Australia and elsewhere who are living off our land. I think now is the time for the Government to buy these plantations and give them to the people. However I would like to remind the Government that it should remember to give these plantations to the original owners of the land on which these plantations are. If, however, the Government adopts the policy of giving a piece of such land to anybody, the real problem will not be solved because the original owners will not be contented in any way. I urge the Government to remember this.

13 August 1974, p. 4078

Mr Tei Abal (Wabag)

... I think the type of land the Minister referred to mostly concerned the land the Germans alienated on the coast. I want the Government to understand that generations have passed by now. I say this because the Government may find it hard to track down the original owners of alienated land. In many parts of this country there are pieces of land on which the various missions have built stations, schools and churches. If the Government also intends to buy this kind of land back, it should make sure that proper negotiations are concluded before such purchases, instead of just expropriating the land.

I also say this because expatriate missionaries will have gone and native missionaries will be looking after the mission establishments. I also fear that many of the people who originally owned such land may do whatever they can to take such land away from the missions, by making use of the provision of this Bill, if passed. Also the customary land ownership of land should be kept in mind. In Papua New Guinea a family owns land no matter what size the piece of land is. In regard to this I do not want the Government to push people into selling their land if they happen to own a lot of land, when others around them are short of land.

The introduction of the Land Groups Bill 1974 attempted to empower customary landowners to manage and reclaim alienated land, though

concern was raised about the potential for future problems when uniting diverse customary groups under shared ownership.

13 August 1974, pp. 4087–89

Mr Thomas Kavali (Jimi – Minister For Lands) – I move –

… this Bill is to provide a means whereby customary groups can hold certain land and can manage and deal with it according to their own customary titles. Land disputes have existed for many years now and it is necessary that such legislation as this be introduced to prevent future land disputes.

… it provides – for the registration and title to land which at present is under dispute; it provides for the restoration of alienated land to customary owners; and it also provides means of settling land disputes between tribal groups …

Mr Tei Abal

… there are also some very good provisions in the Bill too, like the one providing for customary groups to unite and set up businesses upon their land. However, Mr Speaker, what confuses me is that if we unite different customary groups to share their land in establishing various types of businesses upon it what will happen to the disputes among them?

In a thoughtful contribution to the land debate, Mr Joseph Iuanga (Kundiawa) supported the return of plantations to original landowners while defending the historical use of barter in land transactions, arguing that such items held genuine value at the time and warned against unjustified claims or expectations of reclaiming developed plantations without proper compensation.

23 August 1974, p. 4299–4300

… Mr Speaker, many of us are now very upset about the way in which land was bought in the old days. Many argue that, if the land had been bought with money, what could that money have been used for. I think we must understand that the Government was right to use salt, axes, laplaps and such items to buy land because those items were the most useful and therefore valuable items to the people in those days. The people accepted

those items because they were of great use to them. They could have done nothing whatsoever with money. The people knew that metal axes were better than stone axes. Therefore I think the Government bought land then in the fairest way. The Government knew that, if the people were given money, they would have no use for it. The items of barter in those days were useful to the people; they were of more real value than money.

My father was paid in kina-shell for the land on which Kundiawa is situated. My father used the shell to pay the bride price for my mother. Now that I am a leader in the Chimbu area, it can be seen that such items in those days were quite valuable. Now I have nine children, one of whom is at university while others are either in high schools or primary schools. So, if it were not for the kina-shell, I would not be here. So I think we should not argue about what was paid for land during those days. We must understand that the Government of that day did what was best then. If some members argue that the Australian Government was wrong in taking such measures, the members themselves will be wrong in claiming undue importance for themselves. If the Government had offered them money then for their land, the people would have refused to sell the land. What development would have resulted? Therefore some of us I think are unjustly claiming ownership of other people's property for which they were adequately paid.

Mr Speaker, after independence this country will be a multi-racial society

“
My father was paid in kina-shell for the land on which Kundiawa is situated. My father used the shell to pay the bride price for my mother.

and those people who own plantations now will not just lose their property without being compensated. ...

... this is now a united, self-governing country and we will be independent very soon. Therefore to conclude I would again like to stress that land in the past was bought with the most valuable and useful of all items to the people at that time. The same thing applied to the acquisition of land on Manus. An axe could have been used to buy land in which case the axe,

being a valuable item, may have been used as part of a bride price. We must abandon any hope of simply taking over the operation of plantations because such properties cost a lot to develop. Just consider any land lying in its natural state. Mr Deputy Speaker, we must forget dreams of walking in and settling on any foreign owned plantation that one sees is productive.

Fr John Momis (Bougainville) argued that true nationalism required respecting local ownership over the expectations of former colonial powers or international interests.

23 August 1974, p. 4334

... The Government must carefully consider and settle the land situation before any foreign interests are allowed to settle on any area of land. During the time of nationalism, many of our outgoing colonial administrators will not be very pleased about our way of approaching these matters. That is natural because they probably have never been taught to respect people who even though primitive, are the true nationalists. These approaches are some of the tests to see who is prepared to identify himself on equal terms with our people. If you are a good father, you will respect your child when he grows up. It is bad to consider yourself on different terms from your son. That is bad practice. It is true that certain people in Australia and other countries will not be very pleased with our actions but the primary role of this Parliament is not to be concerned about America or any other country. Our sole responsibility is to fulfil the needs of our people.

3.12 Bougainville and the politics of economic sovereignty

The Bougainville Copper Agreement became a defining issue in Papua New Guinea's assertion of economic sovereignty. Chief Minister Mr Michael Somare (East Sepik) and other leaders, including Fr John Momis (Bougainville), called for a fundamental shift in how profits from mineral extraction were distributed, insisting that these resources belonged to the people of Papua New Guinea.

In March 1974, Mr Somare called for a thorough review of the Bougainville Copper Agreement, stressing the need for greater national

control, fairer revenue distribution, and long-term benefits for the people of Papua New Guinea from the country's mineral resources.

4 March 1974, p. 3318

... I am sure that all honourable members now realise how big and how profitable the Bougainville copper mine is.

Last year, Bougainville Copper made a profit of $158 million. This is the biggest profit ever recorded by an Australian or South-East Asian company and it may be the biggest profit ever made by a single copper mine anywhere in the world. Whenever our country has a project that is so big and so profitable, the country's leaders must look closely to ensure that the project provides enough benefits for the people. We must be sure that taxes and other payments which the project produces are high enough to give us the funds we need for our development. We must be sure that the Government has enough control over the project so that it will contribute to the kind of development that we want. ...

Mr Speaker, copper and other minerals belong to the people of Papua New Guinea. They do not belong to any foreign corporations. Secondly, it is up to us to choose how and when to develop those great resources. We may not yet have the skilled people to do all the work of building and operating a mine and so we may choose to have foreign companies come in and do this work for us. But we must keep control of the way in which the resources are developed. We must be careful how high a price we pay for this development and that the development does not destroy our society.

Finally, Sir, we must ensure that whenever conditions beyond the control of either the company or the Government, produce spectacular windfall profits, the lion's share of these gains must be kept by Papua New Guinea. This follows logically from the first point, namely that it is our copper.

... I also wish to assure honourable members of this House that I am determined that the people of Papua New Guinea will derive the maximum possible benefit from the Bougainville mine and from every other copper deposit and I ask for your support in these efforts.

Fr Momis denounced the exploitation of Papua New Guinea's resources by multinational corporations and affirmed that only the national

“

Last year, Bougainville Copper made a profit of $158 million. … Mr Speaker, copper and other minerals belong to the people of Papua New Guinea. They do not belong to any foreign corporations.

Copper mine, Bougainville, 1971
NAA: 11903475

government had the legitimate authority to manage and tax such ventures on behalf of its people.

25 June 1974, pp. 3797–8

When dealing with multi-national corporations the only legitimate channel is through the National Government. Only the National Government can tax these mining companies which grab the lion's share of the profits made in this country. If I had my own way I would move a motion to create a doctrine of stealing in this country because many of the people who come to this country have been exploiting the natural resources of this country. They are exploiting us as in the olden days when our people were not civilized. …

The natural resources such as the one being exploited by Bougainville Copper are not neutral properties. As the Honourable Chief Minister has stated, these resources belong to the people of Papua New Guinea, and I am very glad he said this. These resources do not belong to the foreign investors who have come here to exploit us and our resources. Because of this I oppose the amendment brought in by my friend. It might look good, but in actual fact it is not.

“
If I had my own way I would move a motion to create a doctrine of stealing in this country because many of the people who come to this country have been exploiting the natural resources of this country.

In October 1974 Mr Somare outlined the government's successful renegotiation of the Bougainville Copper Agreement, reaffirming the principle that the country must receive a fair share of profits from mineral extraction.

14 October 1974, p. 4692

Mr Speaker, today I want to tell honourable members some of the details of the renegotiation of the Bougainville Copper Agreement. When I first announced my Government's intention to renegotiate the 1967 agreement in a statement to this House on 4 March, I said that we had two basic principles. Firstly the mineral resources belong to the people of Papua New Guinea

and they should receive a fair price for them – a price that reflects the value of the world market. Secondly the foreign companies that invest in mining and do the work of taking the minerals from the ground and sell them are entitled to a fair return on their investment, but only to a fair return. If there are spectacular profits caused by high world market prices, Papua New Guinea should receive the lion's share of these excess profits.

The new arrangements just negotiated with officials of Bougainville Copper Limited are completely consistent with these two basic principles. We have established a tax system that gives the company a fair return, but ensures that Papua New Guinea will, beginning this year, gets a fair price for the minerals it is selling.

In the House, Mr Somare hailed the successful renegotiation as a pivotal moment in asserting Papua New Guinea's sovereignty.

2 December 1974, p. 5255

Mr Speaker, this Bill will approve the agreement between the Government and Bougainville Copper Limited to change the old 1967 Bougainville Copper Agreement. The successful renegotiation of the Bougainville Agreement is an important landmark in the history of our country. We are now truly masters in our own house, shaping institutions and events according to our own priorities and ideas. This renegotiation shows that self-government is not just an empty promise, but a meaningful step in making this our nation. We have, over many months, struggled hard against the forces opposed to renegotiation. We have struggled to defend the rights of our people. We have struggled to get a fair price for the resources being taken from our ground, and we have sought to ensure a reasonable return to the company so that potential investors can gain fair benefits

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We have established a tax system that gives the company a fair return, but ensures that Papua New Guinea will, beginning this year, gets a fair price for the minerals it is selling.

for blending their skills with those of Papua New Guineans.

... We looked at the kinds of mining agreements that other countries around the world were making. We invited overseas experts to advise us. We took into account the mining policy resolution of this House passed in November 1972. We listened carefully to the speeches of the Minister for Mines and Energy, the Honourable Sir Paul Lapun, and the Honourable Member for Bougainville Regional [Fr John Momis] who strongly urged renegotiations. By the beginning of this year when Bougainville Copper announced its tax free profit of $158 million we were prepared to take action. We set up a high powered negotiating team, headed by the Secretary for Finance and the Director of the Central Planning Office. The negotiations began in earnest on 12 June 1974. ...

3.13 Reflections on colonialism and identity

As Papua New Guinea approached independence, House of Assembly debates reflected a range of views on Australia's colonial legacy – some members acknowledged its role in development and governance, while others highlighted the lasting impact of historical injustices and the need to address regional grievances shaped by diverse colonial experiences.

In a reflective speech to the House, Mr John Guise (Alotau) recounted a pivotal moment in 1965 when he opposed proposals for Papua to become a state of Australia, instead advocating for a united and independent Papua New Guinea.

8 March 1974, p. 3409

I do not want to become emotional, Sir. I remember in 1965 when I was Chairman of the Select Committee on Political Development I had the honour to lead this delegation before the late Harold Holt and his Government. And as we sat around the table my brother Australian members of this planning committee argued that Papua must become a seventh State of Australia. I shall be writing my memoirs and in it will be quite a revelation. My brother Australian members argued before Harold Holt that Papua would be much better as

a seventh State of Australia. As Chairman I argued for a united

> “My brother Australian members argued before Harold Holt that Papua would be much better as a seventh State of Australia …

nation of Papua New Guinea, but submitted at that meeting, which was a vital one, that in this united nation of Papua New Guinea everything must be done for the economic development of Papua. I also argued that I did not consider myself as a second-class Australian citizen of Papua, but considered myself to be a humble son of Papua and New Guinea. The tussle was fierce behind the scenes. I repeat that the tussle was fierce. All my brother Australians, including those in the Government, deserted me. Yet, thank God, Mr Speaker, I had members from Papua and New Guinea who were with me.

Mr Timothy Ward (Esa'ala) defended the legacy of the Australian administration, describing it as a largely benevolent force that contributed to development, peace, and economic stability in Papua New Guinea.

Hill country people whose land is unsuitable for cash crops deriving income from their timber, Colonial New Guinea, 1955.
NAA: 7558749

20 August 1974, p. 4226

... let us also admit that the great majority of those who live in Papua New Guinea do so because it is a good place to live. The Australian colonial system, if it was truly this and not a benevolent paternalism, has achieved miracles within the short period after the Second World War. Despite attacks on mission and government workers, it has done its job well. Despite assaults on the private sector, this economic backbone of the Government spread peace and harmony by employing and serving all people irrespective of race.

Mr John Guise (Alotau) reflected on the lasting impact of diverse colonial influences across Papua New Guinea and emphasised the challenge of forging national unity from these historically shaped regional identities.

24 September 1974, p. 4436

Mr Deputy Speaker, what we need to look at is the various colonial influences which have created various attitudes that we have inherited. For example, Mr Deputy Speaker, there have been three different types of colonial rule for 100 years or more. In Papua there has been a British colonial mentality. On the New Guinea mainland and islands it had German colonial overtones. In the Highlands it has had an Australian colonial outlook and in Bougainville it has had a combined British and German colonial mentality when it was transferred from the British Solomon Islands to become a German colony before the 1914 war.

Mr Deputy Speaker, whether we like it or not, or whether we like to admit it or not, all these various colonial forces have left a distinct mark on the attitudes of our people in the areas that I have mentioned. Mr Deputy Speaker, from this mass diversity of different colonial regimes we now have as our responsibility and solemn duty to create a united nation. ...

“
The Australian colonial system, if it was truly this and not a benevolent paternalism, has achieved miracles within the short period after the Second World War.

Whereas Fr John Momis (Bougainville) highlighted the historical mistreatment of Bougainvilleans by colonial powers which shaped local frustrations and their drive for greater government understanding and support.

19 June 1975, p. 5880

During the Nineteenth Century when the Australians and Germans came they practised blackbirding and this has affected Bougainville more than any other district in Papua New Guinea. The people were treated like animals and this is something which cannot be forgotten. This is one of the main causes of this frustration which has created different attitudes and feelings among the people today. During the early Twentieth Century in 1906 and 1907, the Australians and Germans carried out expeditions to get people to work on plantations and these people were ill-treated. Bougainvilleans according to historians were affected more than people in any other area. This very bad treatment meted out to Bougainvilleans has demoralised them and that is why they have this frustration.

“During the Nineteenth Century when the Australians and Germans came they practised blackbirding … The people were treated like animals and this is something which cannot be forgotten.

Even during the war the Japanese who occupied the island ill-treated the people and so did the Americans and other outsiders who came to the island. Therefore I do not think it is easy to forget this feeling of being ill-treated. That is why I think this Government should give them more consideration and attention, to erase these frustrations and ill-feeling among the people.

3.14 Australian aid and the economic transition to independence

As Papua New Guinea prepared for independence, Chief Minister Mr Michael Somare (East Sepik) initially reassured the nation that

substantial Australian aid would support a stable economic transition. However, in 1975 the global economic downturn, as a result of the oil shocks, and an increase in domestic spending, led to Australian cuts to the Papua New Guinea budget and the reclassification of repatriation costs as 'aid'. Somare expressed disappointment and emphasised the need for a respectful, long-term aid partnership – acknowledging Australia's economic constraints while affirming Papua New Guinea's determination to adapt, make sacrifices, and move forward with dignity and self-reliance. It was concerning, however, that Papua New Guinea was heading towards independence with a substantially reduced budget and the sense they could not rely on Australian promises.

1 March 1974, pp. 3271–2

Mr Speaker, the level of government activity primarily depends on the amount of money the Government has at its disposal. Our revenue comes from three main sources – internal revenue, loans and foreign aid. We have a general idea of the level of internal revenue and loans we can expect over the next three years. The biggest question mark for us has been the likely level of foreign aid and, in particular, the amount of Australian assistance. So there is no doubt that it is Australia's intention to continue to support Papua New Guinea's development; honourable members of this House will be aware of the past statements made by the Australian Government. However my Government has been concerned to translate these statements into money terms.

On 18 February 1974 we were able to hold top level political discussions on the matter with Australian ministers. … The outcome of these talks was an agreement to define further the Australian assurances. I have received a letter from the Australian Prime Minister outlining his Government's position. Firstly the Prime Minister restates past assurances and I quote from his letter:

'… In view of the imminence of independence, I am writing now, on behalf of the Australian Government, to inform you that on the basis of present indications a united Papua New Guinea can proceed on the assumption that Australia will provide a total of at least $500 million for expenditure on economic and social aid in one

form or another over the three-year period commencing 1974–75. …'

… Australia will definitely support us through independence and the early years after independence with a sufficient level of aid; sufficient to maintain and extend existing government activities and sufficient to support the recasting of our programmes and policies towards the achievement of the eight point plan.

By August 1975, following a significant cut in Australian aid, Mr Somare expressed deep disappointment and clarified that the Employment Security Scheme (repatriation settlement for expatriate public servants) was never intended as aid. While reaffirming Papua New Guinea's dignity and self-reliance, he stressed the need for a clearer, mutually respectful long-term aid relationship – underscoring the challenges of transitioning from dependency to sovereign partnership.

18 August 1975, pp. 5994–5

… I was very disappointed at the Australian Cabinet decision on aid to Papua New Guinea this year, because it fell short of our needs by a very wide margin and represented a significant reduction on earlier years in real terms. …

> "… Australia will definitely support us through independence and the early years after independence with a sufficient level of aid …

… Mr Speaker, members will remember that ESS stands for Employment Security Scheme – the compensation provided to departing civil servants for loss of career prospects. I have just had talks with Mr Peacock in Port Moresby about the Employment Security Scheme. He was the Minister who was responsible for the introduction of this scheme. I was the Minister responsible who had these discussions with him. It was he who took the scheme through Cabinet. He has told me time and again that the Employment Security Scheme was never considered as aid to Papua New Guinea. These talks confirmed what was well understood by the ministers who reached the agreement on the $500 million at Kirribilli House. The thought that large payments to Australians who

had retired to Australia could be considered as aid to Papua New Guinea never entered our heads. But Australian policy will have to change if aid is to reach $500 million over three years without the ESS even in the inflated dollars of today.

Mr Speaker, Papua New Guineans are not beggars and now that we have failed to persuade the Australian Prime Minister of the need to reinstate part of the cut from our aid request, and to honour his pledge of $500 million, we are getting on with the job of adjusting to lower living standards and services. However it should be very clear to everyone that it is impossible for two nations to conduct their relations as if one was a department of the other. We have been treated very badly this year – I do not regret it because we have been dependent on them – and to prevent random events in Australia doing this to us again it is essential that we soon reach an agreed perspective with the Australian Government on our long-term aid relationship. …

> “Because of this world-wide inflation, the Australian Government has to cut down its aid to the third world countries …

Following a visit to Canberra, Mr Somare acknowledged Australia's own economic pressures but assured the nation that, despite the setback, the government was prepared to make sacrifices and continue the path towards self-reliance.

19 August 1975, p. 6034

Because of this world-wide inflation, the Australian Government has to cut down its aid to the third world countries, namely Papua New Guinea, Indonesia, Bangladesh and some other South-East Asian countries. The reason for cutting down the aid is simple. The Australian Government has its own commitments too. This means that it has to do something for the ratepayers about the problems of the economic climate and unemployment. …

… in the past we were dependent, that is we were totally under the control of Australia. Australia used to treat us as a department of the Government

because we were under the control of the Department of External Territories. However during this historic period Australia treats us as an independent country. It is true that Papua New Guinea is on the top of the list of those countries to which Australia gives aid. In fact we receive a larger amount than other countries. We are given similar treatment to Australia's States. They too are affected by this cut-down in the Budget. So the main reason my senior ministers and I went down there was to negotiate with the Government in order to get more money to develop our country. The Minister for Finance and myself are worried, but we feel that we can survive. However we must make some sacrifices.

3.15 K-Day and the kina

In the lead-up to independence, Finance Minister Mr Julius Chan (Namatanai) announced the introduction of Papua New Guinea's own currency – Kina and Toea – to replace Australian dollars and cents, marking a major step towards economic sovereignty.
8 March 1974, p. 3430

... (1) Bank notes of three denominations will be issued in Papua New Guinea to replace the existing Australian $2, $5 and $10 bank notes. Papua New Guinea's bank notes will be the same size as the present Australian $1, $2 and $5 bank notes respectively and will be printed by the same processes and incorporate similar security features, to minimise the risk of forgery, as the Australian bank notes.

(2) Coins of six denominations will be issued to replace the Australian 1, 2, 5, 10 and 20 cent coins and the Australian $1 bank note. The Government accepted the Currency Working Group's recommendation to issue a $1 coin in Papua New Guinea because a coin has a substantially longer 'life' than a bank note, which enables considerable savings to be achieved in the cost of issuing this denomination. ...

29 October 1974, p. 5100

... it has been decided to begin issuing Papua New Guinea currency towards the end of April 1975. I will announce the exact date later. On this date, therefore, banks throughout Papua

New Guinea will commence issuing kina and toea and will progressively remove from circulation Australian bank notes and coins.

… On and after 'K-day', when kina and toea are issued, all internal financial transactions will need to be denominated in terms of kina and toea rather than dollars and cents. For example bank accounts will be expressed in kina and toea rather than the equivalent Australian currency units. I have already indicated to the House that Australian currency will continue to circulate alongside Papua New Guinea bank notes and coins for some time after the introduction of Papua New Guinea currency. During this dual currency period both currencies will be legal tender and will be interchangeable on a one-for-one basis. This means that 1 kina will be exactly equal in value to 1 dollar and 1 toea will be equivalent in value to 1 cent.

While the move was broadly supported, some members, including Opposition Leader Tei Abal, expressed concern over specific design choices, such as the introduction of a 1-kina coin instead of a note.
7 March 1975, p. 5642

Mr Tei Abal (Wabag)

… I think that this is a good Bill. However I am a bit confused with the new currency. There are 100 toea in 1 kina which is equivalent to 100 cents in 1 dollar which in Australia is a note. In our currency 1 kina is a coin and I feel this is not good. I agree with having a 50 toea coin similar to the 50 cent coin at present, but I do not agree with having a 1 kina coin with a hole in the middle. …

1 kina coin, 1975

3.16 Defining identity in the final steps to independence

As Papua New Guinea approached independence, national leaders emphasised the importance of unity, self-representation, and sovereignty through symbolic and practical measures – from asserting control over institutions like the national newspaper and anthem, to affirming the value of shared national identity and the introduction of a uniquely Papua New Guinean passport.

17 June 1975, p. 5842

Mr Michael Somare (East Sepik)

I believe that every member of this House and every right-thinking citizen will agree with me when I say that national unity is also non-negotiable. More than this: it is our sacred trust and what we all believe in. National unity is something no individual or group can violate or be allowed to discard or destroy just because it suits an unprincipled selfish political desire.

25 June 1974, p. 3792

... Similarly we have created great national institutions – the Defence Force and police, carefully selected to be representative of all regions, the postal and telephone service, the national airline. Wherever you look you will see how our development has flourished as one nation.

Mr Buaki Singeri (Kabwum) argued that a truly national newspaper should be locally owned and reflect the voice and interests of Papua New Guineans.

27 June 1974, pp. 3829–30

I move –

That this House requests the Government to arrange to take over Papua New Guinea's only national newspaper without delay ...

... Sir, this newspaper will bring the news of the Government's work or news of other electorates and so forth to the people. Let me tell you, Mr Speaker, that Papua New Guinea must have its own newspaper

now, without delay. Papua New Guinea is already a strong country and in only six months it will become an independent nation. By this time we should have full control of everything; I do not want to see Australia taking a hand in running any newspaper. ...

As Papua New Guinea prepared for Independence, debate arose over the content of the proposed national anthem, with some members – like Mr Matiabe Yuwi (Tari–Komo) – arguing it should reflect key national figures and divine guidance.

17 June 1975, p. 5828

I understand that there were about 70 songs sent to the National Anthem Committee and of the 70 songs only five songs were selected. These songs I understand are continually broadcast over the air. I personally feel that these five songs do not express the true identity of this country. Many people have come up with ideas that the anthem should have names such as God's and the Chief Minister's in it. However it should not include Mr Michael Somare's name, but the position of the Chief Minister should always be remembered in the anthem of this country. The mention of Queen and the King of England always remains in the anthem with which we are familiar. Therefore we should include mention of God and the Chief Minister in our anthem.

“
Among the 70 entries only five were selected which the committee considered represented the true identity of Papua New Guinea.

Mr Somare emphasised the importance of broader national identity and deferred to the judgement of the appointed National Anthem Committee.

Mr Speaker, the National Anthem Committee was set up to gather and consider the 70 songs sent in by people. The committee consists of six members, some of whom are professional musicians. Among the 70 entries only five were selected which the committee considered represented the true identity

of Papua New Guinea. We are all aware that the National Broadcasting Commission broadcasts these five songs and, if the Honourable Member is in favour of song No. 3, he should notify the NBC that he is in favour of this song. With regard to the question of names, I would say that it would be proper for the anthem to say something about the country. The five anthems selected by the committee cover that requirement. …

Introducing the Passports Bill 1975, Sir Maori Kiki (Moresby Inland) explained that Papua New Guinea would begin issuing its own passports after independence, marking a key step in asserting national sovereignty and identity.

22 August 1975, p. 6080

At present any Papua New Guinean travelling overseas uses an Australian passport. Naturally this will not be possible after independence. It is necessary that as an independent nation Papua New Guinea issue passports so that those people in whom we have an interest or who are entitled to the protection or assistance of the Government can be readily identified. This legislation is similar to that of Australia's and at the same time is simplified as much as possible.

3.17 Planning Papua New Guinea's first Independence Day

In March 1975 Chief Minister Mr Michael Somare (East Sepik) outlined plans for inclusive nationwide celebrations, emphasising local participation, dignitary visits, and unity in marking the birth of the new nation.

3 March 1975, p. 5514

… We have an Independence Day Celebrations Committee already set up and this committee is carrying out preparations for independence. We are not in a position to contact Heads of State of other countries to come at this point of time, because the House has not yet agreed on the date for independence to allow us to send out invitations. We have already carried out preparations for what is to happen on this day when VIPs from other countries arrive. A flag will be hoisted at Waigani at midnight and this will be accompanied by fireworks and a gun salute. Independence

Day Celebrations will not be conducted in this House. We are planning to bring celebrations to all people throughout Papua New Guinea, so that everyone can take part, as independence is for the people. Members will remain in their electorates to share this day with their people.

After Independence Day Celebrations VIPs will be taken around to all districts to meet the people and see what our country looks like. These dignitaries will be first welcomed in Port Moresby when they will attend the-hoisting of the flag. Ministers and members will remain in their electorates to welcome dignitaries when they arrive. Transport arrangements are underway. We feel that the support of all members will make this day an important part of our country's history.

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We are planning to bring celebrations to all people throughout Papua New Guinea, so that everyone can take part, as independence is for the people.

Australian Governor-General Sir John Kerr arrives for Independence Day, 1975.
NAA: 11755653

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Today will probably be the last day of the House of Assembly which was established in 1964, when I and a few other honourable members present were first elected to Parliament.

Speaker of the House Barry Holloway and his wife, journalist Ikini Yaboyang, 1975
NAA: 33207709

Some House members, such as Mr Bono Azanifa (who succeeded Mr Antihemi Kimi) raised concerns about VIP visits being limited to certain regions, and instead argued that broader inclusion was essential to accurately represent national unity and pride across all districts.

26 August 1975, p. 6125

Mr Bono Azanifa (Henganofi)

I direct my question to the Deputy Chief Minister. When VIPs from overseas come to Port Moresby for the independence [celebrations], could some of them be escorted to attend celebrations held in other parts of the country?

Mr Speaker (Barry Holloway)

There will only be a few important visitors who will tour certain parts of the country. We know that Prince Charles will visit Wewak, Kundiawa and Daru. But many VIPs such as the Australian Governor-General and Prime Minister will be here for only a short while. They cannot leave their countries too long because when they go back their work might be too heavy. Only some will tour because many invitations have not been replied to yet. Therefore we do not know whether all of the people we invited will be coming.

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… many invitations have not been replied to yet. Therefore we do not know whether all of the people we invited will be coming.

Mr Matiabe Yuwi (Tari–Komo)

… the Southern Highland ought to be visited by VIPs, especially such important visitors like Prince Charles. The Southern Highlands is one of the most unique districts in the country. Why do you seem to forget my district?

3.18 The last day of the House of Assembly

The final sitting of the House of Assembly was 26 August 1975. The Speaker, Barry Holloway (Eastern Highlands), reflected on its legacy and announced its transformation into the National Parliament on 16 September 1975.

... Today will probably be the last day of the House of Assembly which was established in 1964, when I and a few other honourable members present were first elected to Parliament. Elections for the Second House took place in 1968 and for the Third House in 1972. We have been working since then as the House of Assembly and have seen the successful achievement of self-government. However on attaining our independence this supreme legislature will no longer be referred to as the House of Assembly, but the National Parliament.

> “It was not an easy task for me as Speaker and neither was it easy for the 100 members. Everyone wanted to talk but not all were given the chance.

We passed an organic law in the National Constituent Assembly today which sets 16 September 1975 as the definite date of the first National Parliament, with the sitting commencing at 2 p.m. on that day. This will be sufficient notice for members of that meeting. The organic law also makes it quite clear that the following meeting of the National Parliament will commence on 29 September. The date of the meeting after that will be set by the Speaker on the advice of Sir John Guise who will then be the Governor-General, and members will be given 14 days' notice of the date.

It was not an easy task for me as Speaker and neither was it easy for the 100 members. Everyone wanted to talk but not all were given the chance. There were times when things began to get out of hand a little bit, but usually good sense prevailed. We have already succeeded in drawing up the constitution which was the most important business of the National Constituent Assembly and we also succeeded in completing approximately 800 items of government business in the House of Assembly.

At the final sitting of the House of Assembly, Chief Minister Mr Michael Somare paid tribute to the newly knighted Sir John Guise (Alotau) for his longstanding service and leadership, honouring his appointment as Papua New Guinea's first governor-general.

26 August 1975. p. 6147

... It was the wish of this Parliament to appoint him as our first Governor-General and I would like to assure you, Sir John, that you can rest assured that, when this Parliament is working, even though we the members may be young, we will always try to follow the examples and standards that you have set for the people of this country. We are confident that we shall walk in your footsteps, follow the standards and examples that you set since you first entered into the political arena until today when we have appointed you to an office much higher than this Parliament, as the custodian of the Papua New Guinea people.

3.19 Prime Minister's Independence Day speech

16 September 1975

Mr Michael Somare

My people of Papua New Guinea, the big day we have looked forward to for so long – our Independence Day – has arrived. Today is the 16th of September, 1975 – the day of independence for Papua New Guinea. We have talked about this day, we have planned for it, worked for it and looked forward to it.

Today, our young nation takes possession of the prize which marks our people's determination and hard work. This country and its people now enter independence and sovereignty, and as from now, we will be counted among the family of nations. I think we are more fortunate than many other countries.

We have been lucky because we have reached full nationhood without the fighting and bloodshed that has been experienced by many other former colonies.

But even so, our achievement of independence still represents years of planning, overcoming opposition, debates, and hard work on the part of everyone who has contributed to the birth of our new nation. I know that every man, woman and child of our nation shares this moment of pride and happiness with one heart, to join in celebrating our independence.

At this point, I wish to remind all of us too that this is just the beginning. Now we must stand on our own two feet and work harder than ever before. Our land and our history has plenty to offer our people in this effort. Our rich

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Today, our young nation takes possession of the prize which marks our people’s determination and hard work … as from now, we will be counted among the family of nations.

Members of the National Executive Council, 24 September 1975
Left to right, front row: *Mr T. Kavali, OBE, MP; Sir A.M. Kiki, KBE, MP; Mr M.T. Somare, MP; Mr J. Chan, CBE, MP; Sir P. Lapun, KBE, MP*
Middle row: *Mr E. Olewale, MP; Mr M. Sasakila, MP; Mr J. Poe, MP; Dr R. Taureka, MP; Mr I. Okuk, MP; Mr G. Rea, MP; Mr K. Diria, OBE, MP; Mr D. Mola, MP; Mr S. Tago MP*
Back row: *Mr M.A. Lynch (Secretary to N.E.C.); Mr P. Lus, MP; Mr B. Jephcott, MP; Mr B. Sali, MP; Mr Y. Belo, MP*
Mark Lynch personal papers

cultures have always provided us with our sense of values, and will continue to do so.

This has meant that our people have developed a distinctive life-style and attitudes that are wholly our own. Our task now is to find a way of life that suits our own people, and at the same time will equip us to take our place in the world family of nations. From our own resources and traditions, from shared experiences and varied skills – borrowing ideas from others and adapting them to suit our own national needs.

As a united people we will achieve our goals with the stability of our background to support us, and the richness of the earth to provide for us. Many who have helped to build this nation are no longer with us. Their efforts and services must be remembered at this time.

I speak of men like Matthias To Liman, Pita Simogun, Kondom Agaundo, Vin ToBaining, Somu Sigob, Paulus Arek, Sir Donald Cleland and many more. This country owes them a great deal. Churchmen, businessmen and civil servants all played their part. We are now, indeed, masters of our destiny.

Our leaders hold the responsibility for the future of our country and its governments. The people's welfare, freedom and peace will be the primary concern of our politicians.

The people have given our politicians their mandate, but that mandate rests with the people. I am sure that our leaders will always ensure that our independence from others and our national unity are the basis of their service to the people.

In conclusion, I would like to say again that the achievement of

> "I would like to assure you, Sir John, that … when this Parliament is working, even though we the members may be young, we will always try to follow the examples and standards that you have set …

independence is our national pride. We do not owe this independence to the Government of Papua New Guinea, nor to the Government of Australia, nor even to the United Nations that has watched over our progress during the past years.

We owe our independence to the men and women in the villages who helped build roads to link our diverse people together. We owe it to others who have counselled

wisely on village, district and government committees, and to our fathers and mothers who have had the vision to work in some small way towards our freedom.

We are indebted to wise elders of our own clans, and those from other lands who saw unity and peace as the long term aim of their work. We should work together after independence in the same spirit as those man and women toiled to achieve our independence.

Source: https://www.postcourier.com.pg/prime-ministers-independence-day-speech/

Papua New Guinea Independence Day Celebrations, the lowering of the Australian flag
NAA: 11631362

Left: *Sir John Guise, Prince Charles, Prime Minister Gough Whitlam (obscured), Margaret Whitlam, Prime Minister Michael Somare*

NAA: 11631360

Below: *Children at the Independence celebrations*

NAA: 11755654

Clockwise from right: *Chimbu performers with dignitaries in background*
NAA: 11755723

Prime Minister Gough Whitlam inspects the Guard of Honour, Papua New Guinea Defence Force
NAA: 11755742

Prime Minister Gough Whitlam and his wife Margaret Whitlam attend the Catholic Cathedral in Port Moresby.
NAA: 11755640

Raising the Papua New Guinea flag, 16 September 1975
NAA: 11207244

Children at the Independence Day celebrations
NAA: 11755658

Prime Minister Gough Whitlam meets Papua New Guinea clergy.
NAA: 11755617

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Brad Underhill, Keimelo Gima, Helen Gardner

Australian High Commission
Papua New Guinea

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SIDE BY SIDE, STEP BY STEP

DEAKIN UNIVERSITY

Centre for Contemporary Histories

In 1972, one hundred representatives came together in the Third House of Assembly to debate and legislate the nation to come. These speeches formed our country. Over the next four years members expressed their hopes and fears for the future as Papua New Guinea was granted self-government then claimed independence. On the fiftieth anniversary of Papua New Guinea we can read what was in the hearts and minds of our members who represented the villages, the towns, the Highlands and the islands of our nation, born on 16 September 1975.

Keimelo Gima

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